

BEIJING TODAY

北京青年报

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

September 17 2010 - September 23 2010

NO. 484 CN11-0120

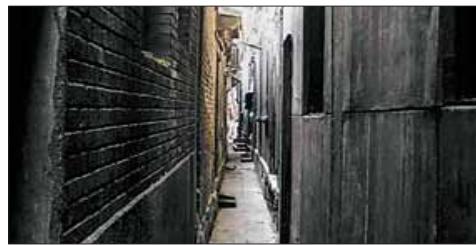
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北京青年报
BEIJING YOUTH DAILY



Pages 20-21 Exploring old Beijing

Walk the city's less-traveled hutong near Qianmen to dig out their secrets and ancient stories.



Pages 12-13 Brace for absurd drama

Harold Pinter has a long history of shaking up society's households. One young Chinese director is recasting his classic *The Homecoming* in a Chinese mold.

Baking for a normal life



There's something special about Crazy Bake. The bakeshop, a cooperative staffed by a group of mentally ill patients from Beijing Chaoyang Mental Health Service Center, has been cooking up strudels and cheesecakes for the expat community for five years. Yvonne Gerig, a Swiss woman who has lived in Beijing for 15 years, started the program with German Natascha Prigge to give patients the kind of meaningful work essential to normal life.

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Photo by Cui Jun

Universities
caught in
lobbying war



Experts meet
on migration
troubles

Retired at
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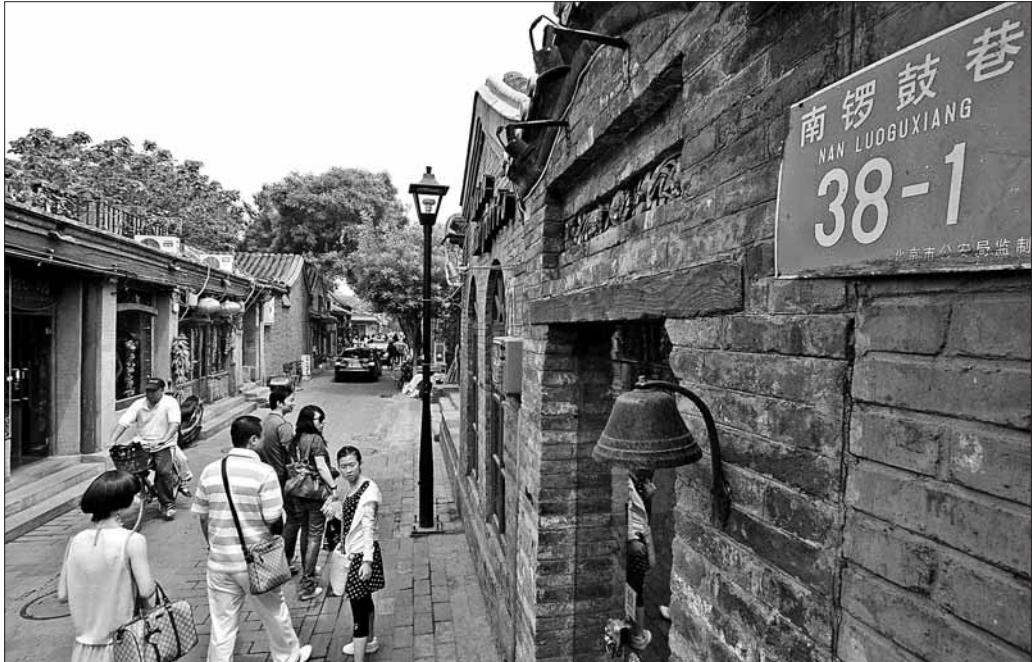
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Under the auspices of the Information Office of Beijing Municipal Government ■ Run by Beijing Youth Daily ■ President: Zhang Yanping ■ Editor in Chief: He Pingping ■ Executive Deputy Editor in Chief: He Pingping ■ Director: Jian Rong ■ Price: 2 yuan per issue ■ 26 yuan for 3 months ■ Address: No.23, Building A, Bajiazhuan Dongli, Chaoyang District, Beijing, China ■ Zip Code: 100026 ■ Telephone/Fax: (010) 65902525 ■ E-mail: bjtoday@ynet.com ■ Hotline for subscription: (010) 67756666 (Chinese), (010) 65902626 (English) ■ Overseas Code Number: D1545 ■ Postage Code: 1-364 ■ Overseas Distribution Agent: China International Book Trading Corporation

Businesses begin exodus from Nanluogu Xiang



Many creative businesses in Nanluogu Xiang are packing up because of rent hikes.

CFP Photo

By Zhao Hongyi

Nanluogu Xiang, one of eight commercial streets renovated since 2006, is one of the top after-work venues for expats and office workers.

But increasingly high rent is driving traditional and creative culture businesses away from the street.

Li Yue, owner of Magpie Coffee on the street, recently received a notice from the homeowner saying he broke the contract and will be evicted within two months.

"The contract said we could rent this house till the end of 2012," Li said. After talking with the landlord by phone, Li found the owner wanted to raise the rent.

Six years ago, Li opened Magpie Coffee. His annual rent has increased

steadily from 100,000 yuan to more than 300,000 yuan. "The increase puts a heavy burden on us, but we have persisted and stayed here over the years," he said.

But this time there is no way out. After several rounds of discussions with the homeowner, he has decided to move.

"Magpie Coffee started in this house, and I'm hesitant to leave," Li said.

There are more than 100 shops on Nanluogu Xiang operating coffee houses, bars, small restaurants and souvenir shops, all of which are now being squeezed out by rent.

One tenant, Lamu, opened his Lamu on Stairs as a tailoring shop three years ago. At that time, he left Lijiang, Yunnan Province for

Beijing to make traditional Naxi garments. His rent has increased from 100,000 yuan to more than 300,000 yuan as well.

"I cannot bear it any longer and will close my tailoring shop when the contract expires," Lamu said.

Sauveurs de Coree, a five-year-old Korean restaurant on the street, will also close. Five years ago, its 80-square-meter room cost 120,000 yuan: today it costs more than 400,000 yuan.

"At this price, we can hardly make any profit," said Zhou, the owner. "We will have to move out in the near future."

A number of shops have already disappeared from the street.

Grifted, a creative products shop, left earlier this year after three

years on the street. Mirch Masala, an Indian restaurant, is gone, as are Fish Nation and Roaster, the Japanese barbecue shop.

Bars like Single-edge Eyelid Bar, created by a group of young men, have also closed after two years of struggling.

Unlike the business operators, homeowners on the street are optimistic about the value of their property.

An agent surnamed Tian, a realtor with Zhenshang Property, said the exodus of industry can be blamed on greedy homeowners charging irrational prices and on the speculators who are gambling on the street's real estate.

"This bubble will burst – sooner or later," Tian said.

'Anger-release' shops attract netizens

By Chu Meng

As many as 400 Taobao shops are winning attention by providing "anger-release" services.

For a fee, the shop owner allows clients to phone him or her and scream away their daily stress.

A surprising number of people are willing to pay someone to listen to their scolding and cursing. The advertisements encourage clients to "Get rid of pressure," "Enjoy scolding" and "Relax."

"I was inspired by some of my girlfriends who use these services to unload troubles related to family, school and work," said Wang Ping, owner of an anger-release shop in Shanghai.

But Wang downplays the role of anger in attracting her customers. "I prefer to think of my shop as a 'recycling station' for pressure and annoyance," she said.

Depending on the price, customers are allowed to complain in most any way that will blow off steam. Payment is made with debit or credit card, and shop owners guarantee anonymity.

Some stores offer a price list sorted by time and requirements. Sessions range from 1 to 50 yuan. Normally, it costs about 1 yuan for 10 minutes or anything goes venting over the phone.

It costs about 30 yuan to schedule an interactive service with the storeowner, such as friendly talks. Stores charge 50 yuan for services including psychological consultation.

Guo Qing, 20, a second-year student at China Communication University, said she prefers talking to strangers about her problems. "I am scared to tell my anxieties to my good friends as they might use it against me in the future."

Lang Lihan, 25, said, "I think it is a safe, easy and economical way for me to express my anger and frustration. Sometimes my supervisor blames me for small things and I lose my temper easily around family and close friends."

Psychologists recommended professional methods to relieve stress.

"No registered psychological consultation organizations in China have Taobao shops," said Kong Qingmei, a doctor of psychiatry at Peking University's Sixth Hospital pointed out. "Those online shops only provide unqualified consultation services."

He also warned that many young people using these services may find themselves feeling empty inside after they finish.

"Each negative mental emotion ... has a root cause to be found in your daily life," she said. Persistent negative emotions cannot be shouted away, and time and effort are required to solve their causes.

Rural suicides still frequent despite national 10-year decline

By Li Zhixin

Suicide has been on the decline for the last decade – at least in urban areas.

In a report at the 8th World Suicide Prevention Day last Friday, experts noted that the rural suicide rate far exceeds that of the urban rate due to limited mental health and emergency medical services in the countryside, said Li Xianyun, deputy director of Beijing Suicide Research and Prevention Center.

Few rural residents know to consult a psychologist when they experience prolonged depression or stress. Those who attempt suicide usually do so by ingesting

agricultural chemicals or rat poisons, she said.

While certainly lethal compounds, the fatality rate could be lower if urgent care was available. Survivors are visited by suicide intervention workers who provide a free lockbox for them to use when storing pesticides.

"For many people who are distressed and acting on impulse, the process of finding a key and getting the poison out of the box offers a pause enough to make them rethink their plans," she said.

Generally speaking, suicide goes undisguised in China. It was only after Canadian psy-

chologist Michael Philips and Chinese colleagues published "Suicide Rates in China, 1995-1999" in the *The Lancet* in 2002 that the dormant problem was brought to attention.

The team estimated a mean annual suicide rate of 23 per 100,000 persons and a total of 287,000 suicide deaths per year.

Suicide accounted for 3.6 percent of all deaths in China and was the fifth leading cause of death. The rate in women was 25 percent higher than in men, mainly due to the frequency of suicide in young rural women.

According to the study, rural rates were three times higher than

urban ones – a difference that remained true in both sexes and all age groups.

"The figure is declining with economic development and improved access to mental health services," said Li, a co-author of the study. "But many old people, especially those in rural areas who suffer from physical pain or serious depression, remain a high risk group."

Li said Beijing's authorities have identified suicide as an important issue and allocated funds to study it.

However, the government has yet to put forward a national plan or policy to address the subject.

Lobbying scandal involves universities in liaison closures

By Zhang Dongya

The government's push to shut down a slew of local government liaison offices used to wine and dine officials into favor has exposed a new scandal involving academia.

Universities have their own extensive network of liaison offices throughout the capital and other cities.

While their business is typically more benign, some of the offices are being criticized for wasting university money to win valuable research grants.

Beijing is home to an estimated 60,000 liaison offices. Given how many have been found to be used for unfair purposes, the government is considering mandatory shutdown as the only solution.

Schools in on lobbying

In January, the central government passed new regulations to reign in local government liaison offices in Beijing. The regulations allowed offices affiliated with provinces and municipalities to remain, but forced out those that represented county- or city-level interests.

As many as 5,000 are on the chopping block.

The liaison offices do the work of lobbyists, wining and dining decision makers using the tax money of the people they claim to represent.

Amidst much cheering of the new policy, another tier of liaison offices has been exposed.

The incident, now being labeled "Ph.D. Gate," has its roots in a scandal that began in Nanchang University in Jiangxi Province last year.

A university employee named Guo Hang was reported to have obtained a Ph.D. without completing the necessary academic requirements. Guo was soon discovered to be a front man for the university's liaison office in Beijing.

One internal document said that his valuable "social activities" in the capital prevented him from completing his academic research. However, further investigation by the Ministry of Education after the document was leaked revealed this to be a smokescreen by the university's spokespersons.

There is no exact data about how many universities are funding liaison offices in Beijing, but many – including Shenyang Normal University in Liaoning Province, Southwest Jiaotong University in Sichuan Province and Zhongnan University of Economics and Law in Hubei Province – maintain them at the city level.

Most offices are hidden in



Academic scandals exposed even universities as having liaison offices despite an official decree that they be dismantled. An Xin/CFP



Many liaison offices ordered closed this June are still open. CFP Photo



University liaison offices are hidden in commercial or residential communities and can host up to a dozen faculty members.

commercial or civil communities and host as many as a dozen faculty members assigned by the university. These offices work to recruit students and encourage businesses to enroll their staff in university-organized training classes.

Li Jiancheng, former director of Hunan University's liaison office in Beijing, wrote an article about his five-year experience at the office. He said the office had three major assignments: to collect information, receive university leaders and network with other universities and alumni.

Beijing Liaison Office News

"Beijing receives the most academic resources and opportunities. Building good relationships with the central ministries can help provincial universities win big academic (research) grants," said Janet Zhang, a teacher at Tianjin Normal University.

Large enough for a newspaper

While it is hard to assess how influential these liaison offices are, they are apparently successful enough to own and operate their own newspaper.

Beijing Liaison Office News

is a monthly publication founded by the Administration of Beijing Liaison Office in the 1990s. The restricted publication collected information by and for liaison offices.

In 2008, the paper became available to the public in a 28-page print edition with stories on policies and regulations, investment opportunities, interviews with the heads of liaison offices and advertisements for local tourism.

"We target all the offices and organizations set up in Beijing, including the 50 provincial offices, 500 city-level offices, 300 bureau-level ones and the more than 10,000 chambers of commerce," said Li Gang, president of the *Beijing Liaison Office News*.

The newspaper has close contacts with Beijing offices and distributes 20,000 copies to its supporters. Last year, it expanded onto the Web to offer more information.

"The liaison offices have played significant roles in connecting local and central governments. The 60,000 offices are responsible for a huge [lobbying] market in the capital," Li said.

"We typically cooperate with enterprises and chambers of commerce, but have few connections with the universities' offices. They are too far from the commercial market," he said.

To be regulated

Several of the schools exposed have attempted to solve the problem by rebranding their liaison offices as "research institutes."

The Beijing Liaison Office of Nanchang University now proudly calls itself "Nanchang University Research Institute in Beijing." Hubei's Wuhan University has also renamed itself.

Not one has moved, not one has changed its staff, and all are still trying to curry favor with officials.

Li Gang said university

liaison offices have been entrenched in Beijing's scene for many years. In the past, the offices registered as public institutes, while today they register as companies with industrial and commercial bureaus.

Xiong Bingqi, vice president of 21st Century Education Research Institute, said the universities' liaison offices reflected the gross bureaucratic abuse that is tainting education. Modern university organizations assign their faculty titles similar to the government positions.

Local government liaison offices are also awaiting regulation. Even with the lobbyists sent home, their real estate holdings in Beijing remain, and the vacant offices cost money to keep up.

"Red tape is why these local governments still cling to their offices," Li said.

There are a lot of formalities involved in opening a liaison office. Even if it has been decommissioned, lower governments will still spend to hang onto the name to avoid repeating the process.

Despite a central government order for county liaison offices to close by the end of June, many remain open in other ways.

Li said the policy intended to regulate liaison offices is having the opposite effect.

Small cities and counties are in need of development, and liaison offices help attract central government power to support them, he said. Closing the county-level liaison offices could cause economic development to stagnate.

Director of the Administration of Beijing Liaison Offices and founder of its newspaper Qi Zhenyun said the liaison offices should change their mission to de-emphasize their courting of officials and strengthen their promotion of developing markets.



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Letter from Shanghai

In our modern global village, the World Expo may be losing its appeal for audiences that don't necessarily need to see the world's latest inventions or trends. But it is still an effective and concrete way for people to congregate, to get to know each other and brainstorm. This year it's about urban life.

A country becomes "urban" when more than half of its population lives in the cities. China has almost realized that – from

17 percent in 1978 to 46 percent in 2008.

People enjoy advantages and suffer disadvantages during urban development. The problem's causes may be the same, but the solutions differ. During the expo period, our reporters will touch on the hottest topics at the world fair, find common cases and solutions and record their observations in this series titled "Letter from Shanghai."

Paradox between urban and rural areas



Teddy Cruz's design in San Diego

By He Jianwei

Migration is a paradox for urbanization.

The influx of surplus rural labor into the cities is inevitable during industrialization. Most developed countries have experienced this phenomenon, but developing countries are learning to deal with a massive movement of labor and immigrants and the attendant social problems.

Against the backdrop of the economic crisis, employment and social stability among migrant workers have become dominant concerns for city managers in many developing countries.

Last week, 600 experts and mayors gathered in Shaoxing,

Zhejiang Province, and shared their ideas on urbanization, urban-rural interaction, equalization of public services and innovative growth models at the two-day forum of Expo 2010 with the theme of Economic Transformation and Urban-Rural Relations.

Restriction or integration?

Located on the US-Mexico border adjacent to its sister city of San Diego, California, the Mexican city of Tijuana sees more than 300,000 daily border crossings, making it the busiest land-border crossing in the world.

Tijuana is one of the fastest growing cities in Mexico, with an average of 80,000 people moving to the city every year and 26,000 new houses built every year. It has become a major industrial center since the advent of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994.

Although a steel wall between Tijuana and San Diego guarantees security, cultural diffusion between the two cities occurs nonetheless. On Tijuana's streets are San Diego's signature mini-malls, and the neighborhoods of San Diego contain Tijuana's dense and chaotic markets.

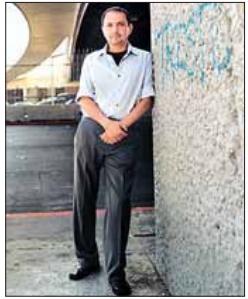
Inspired by the shantytowns of Tijuana, Californian architect Teddy Cruz has brought a project for low-income housing developments to the Expo. Cruz designed 12 affordable housing units for an immigrant community in suburban San Diego.

Cruz has shuttled between suburban San Diego and the shantytowns of Tijuana for more than 10 years. He borrowed the model of typically denser Mexican communities – homes jammed together with leftover space taken up by taco stands, market stalls and gathering places.

Besides improving living standards, Cruz also aims to turn his housing units into a culture center.

He hopes his project can inspire new ways of thinking about border towns. "We should be turning our attention away from the walls and toward the landscape, the ecology and the communities," Cruz said.

"According to NAFTA, the interflow of goods and materials is free, but free population mobility is forbidden," said Dudley Poston, professor of sociology at Texas A&M University. "There



Teddy Cruz, architect for immigrant community in San Diego

are 12 million illegal laborers from Mexico in the US and some extremists say we should send them back home. But without those people, I think the US economy would be worse, because no American would do the jobs the immigrants do."

Poston said China could also take lessons from the experience of the US, a country of immigrants where 98 percent of its population is from immigrant families. "Without floating immigrants, China's rapid growth would not be realized," he said.

Kenji Kosaka, sociology professor at Kwansei Gakuin University, said this parallels the contribution migrant workers made to Japan in the 1950s and 1960s to the high-speed economic development in Japan and that of China today.

Japan started its high economic growth with a "group employment" policy, where the Japanese government encouraged local enterprises to employ rural migrant workers.

"In 1964, more than 70,000 young rural laborers went to Tokyo. The industry at that time was labor-intensive, especially in textiles and electronics. Most young laborers were high school graduates and were employed for unskilled jobs," Kosaka said.

But the government carried out another policy to provide young laborers continuing and vocational education. "It improved their working sufficiency. Collaborative efforts

involving the government, local enterprise associations and individual companies helped integrate rural workers into the cities and provide care for them," he said.

Identity and equalization

No city can ignore the role of migrant workers, not only in terms of the economy but also for social stability.

Pelotas is a southern city in Brazil where one-third of its population was born outside the city. When Adolfo Antonio Fetter became the mayor of Pelotas in 2005, he carried out a program called Social Inclusion with Quality of Life to improve people's lives through housing project, infrastructure construction and public service.

"Equalization is important for social stability. Our program guarantees rural and urban citizens have the same job opportunities," Fetter said.

Unlike other countries', most of China's migrant workers face the problem of *hukou*, a household registration system that locks migrant out of the rights afforded to urban citizens.

But some cities are trying to reform the system.

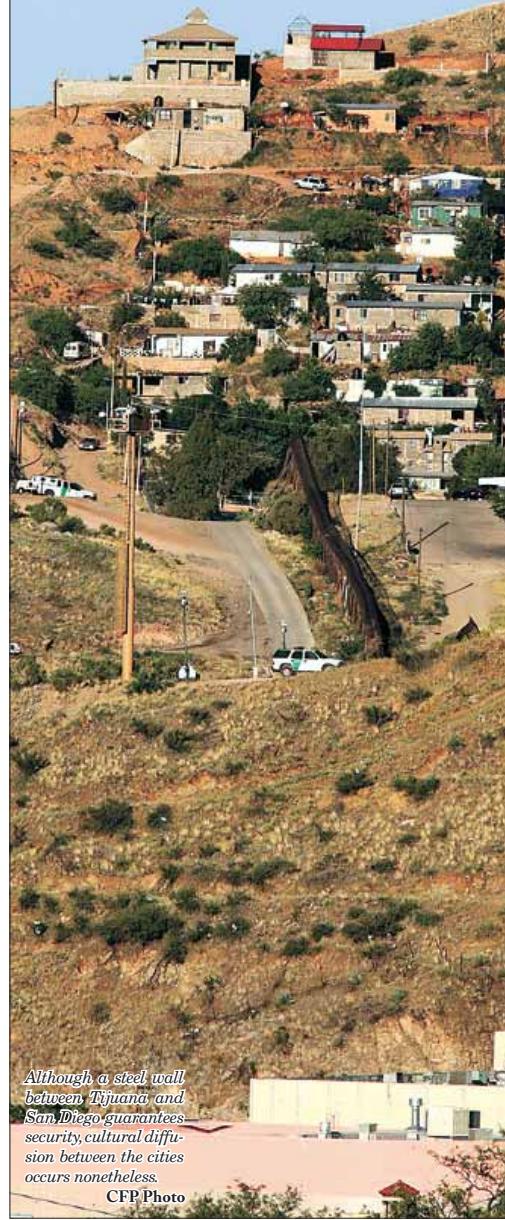
Chongqing started its reform on August 15. "The reform aims to make sure 3.3 million migrant workers in the municipality can become legal residents," said Cui Zhiyuan, a professor of public policy at Tsinghua University. "Hukou is not only a paper. It is tied to the five basic rights of medical insurance, housing, education, welfare and pension."

At the same time, Chongqing has initiated a housing reform by building low-rent houses. "In the future, 30 to 40 percent of urban citizens will live in these low-rent houses," Cui said. "Many young people and low-income people cannot buy houses in the city because of high prices. Many cities have low-rent housing projects, but they only reach 5 to 6 percent of a city's population."

Chongqing gives more opportunities to migrant workers."

"Collaborative efforts involving the government, local enterprise associations and individual companies helped integrate rural workers into the cities and provide care for them."

— Kenji Kosaka, sociology professor at Kwansei Gakuin University



Although a steel wall between Tijuana and San Diego guarantees security, cultural diffusion between the cities occurs nonetheless.

CFP Photo



Under Huaming's program to swap rural land for houses, farmers can exchange their housing lands for an apartment. CFP Photo



Peter Ramsden, manager of the EU's Urban Development Network Program

Most people care about the first-generation migrant's education, but I think we cannot ignore the cultivation of the second generation."

—Peter Ramsden, manager of the EU's Urban Development Network Program

Education and public services

China is experiencing the largest internal migration in history.

More than 622 million people – 47 percent of the population – now live in cities and towns. Almost 200 million of them are migrants, arriving from other parts of the country to seek work, said Zuo Xuejin, executive vice president of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

Another 400 million people from the countryside are expected to migrate to the cities in the next 20 years, Zuo said.

Faced with these numbers, China could take a lesson from Europe's past integration challenges, said Peter Ramsden, manager of the EU's Urban Development Network Program. Using London and its highly diverse population as an example, Ramsden stressed the role of education in integration.

London is a diverse city, where 30 percent of its 7 million people are foreign born and another 30 percent are from ethnic minorities speaking some 250 languages.

Social integration of such a diverse group was anything but smooth.

Ramsden showed a picture of a street near his house where cars had been overturned and burned. "That was in 1981. The second generation of migrants became an unstable element for the city, because they

complained they were unequal to white residents. The same happened in the US and other European countries. Even in 2005 in Paris, more than 5,000 vehicles burned," he said.

Key policies for integration included improving migrants' access to employment and key services such as health, housing and education, and recognition of their qualifications and vocational training.

He urged cities to invest in the education of second-generation migrants as a measure of early intervention. "In 1967, we had an act that ensured migrant education. Schools that enrolled more migrant students were given more resources," he said.

He also suggested that the government institute a policy to guarantee faculty quality at migrant schools. "We can draw good teachers to migrant schools by increasing their salaries," he said. "Most people care about the first-generation migrant's education, but I think we cannot ignore the cultivation of the second generation."

"What we lack is not resources, but a desire to care for and share with the poor," said Antonio Meloto, chairman of Philippines-based Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation, a poverty reduction movement that builds integrated, holistic and sustainable communities in slums.

Bridging the urban-rural gap

Many villages, towns and small cities find themselves forgotten in the new global economy. With their workers leaving for the city, fewer people are available to run what were once rural production centers.

To bridge the widening income gap, villages and towns are offering favorable policies to their inhabitants.

Located in northern Shaanxi Province, Shenmu County is 44th among the country's top 100 economically developed counties. It emerged at the forefront of rural-urban integration when it implemented free healthcare last March.

"There are three major problems holding down China's development: education, healthcare and housing. We already have free 12-year education. Housing is not a serious problem in our area. The most prominent problem was healthcare," said Guo Baocheng, secretary of CPC Shenmu County Committee.

"Last year we invested 150 million yuan

in our free healthcare program. It was not a big figure when taken in the context of a whole county's revenue. Our citizens' happiness comes from stable welfare, not a report of GDP growth."

Another town in Tianjin is trying to solve the housing problem. Huaming Town, located 13 kilometers outside the downtown area, was selected for the Urban Best Practices Area at the Expo.

Under Huaming's program to swap rural land for houses, farmers can exchange their housing land for an apartment in the town. Their farmhouse is then demolished and used to expand their fields.

The program has proved an innovative way to urbanize villages. Many sprawling rural homes were scattered in a low-efficiency system. Collecting them in a central area has opened more land to farming.

Family assets of the farmers in Huaming Town have also increased through the program. Previously, the farmers' homes, which



Guo Baocheng, secretary of CPC Shenmu County Committee

were mainly built with bricks, were estimated to be worth 20,000 to 50,000 yuan. Their new 80-square-meter apartments are valued at more than 400,000 yuan.

The local government also raised funds to buy social insurance for the farmers, who will receive an allowance of several hundred yuan per month after reaching the age of retirement.

Reporter's note



Niu Yixin / CFP

Folding stools Expo's hot item

Aside from the many Haibao mascots and souvenirs from national pavilions, one of the most popular items is a small plastic folding stool.

At first it was unclear why people were bringing small stools to the Expo Garden. But during the wait to enter the Pavilion of Taiwan it became painfully clear.

Long lines at popular pavilions have inspired many visitors to bring their own portable stools so they can rest anywhere.

One middle-aged woman sitting on the stool in line said she rented hers from a shop. Vendors at the Expo entrance also sell stools.

Some small shops near the Expo Garden rent stools for 5 yuan per day with a 20 yuan deposit. The stools can be used between 7 am and midnight.

"If you want to buy one, it costs 10 yuan," she said. "You should just buy one if you plan to come to the Expo for several days."

The next day, this reporter met a vendor selling stools by Gate 7 of the Expo Garden.

"I sell at least 100 stools per day in this area," he said, comparing himself to his neighboring vendors who sell mascots and souvenirs. "Some of them envy my business."

The stool is not an official Expo-licensed product, so it is only available outside the Expo Garden. However, that did not slow its rise to the rank of top unofficial Expo products.

Is the pension system in need of repair?

By Zhao Hongyi

A report released by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences this week questioned the necessity of retiring at the prescribed retirement age. Young workers argue that older colleagues should follow the guidelines and leave their jobs to the next generation; elders, not surprisingly, disagree.

The report says China is becoming an "elderly society." Those older than 60 aged are expected to make up one-fourth of the population by 2030.

"In 2005, statistics showed there were 100.45 million people 65 or above, nearly 7.7 percent of the country's population," said Zhu Fulin, director of the social welfare faculty from the Central University of Finance and Economics. "The figure will increase tremendously in the next two and three decades."

By 2035, there will be 810 million workers and 294 million retirees living on pensions, Yang Yasui, director of the center for social welfare studies at Tsinghua University, said in the report.

These estimates are causing worry about whether China's relatively young pension system, established in 1992, can support all these new retirees. The system covers those who work in cities and some elders in rural areas.

According to a pension law approved in 1997, male workers should retire at the age of 60 and females at 55. This does not include senior officials, who can work until 65.

At present, the law requires retirees to have 15 consecutive years of payment into the national pension fund to receive their pensions after retirement. But many young workers, especially those from the countryside, have refused to join the system.

The pension fund is at about 700 billion yuan this year. It increases very slowly, barely fast enough to offset inflation, said Dai Xianglong, chairman of the national pension fund.

At a seminar held by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, government representatives said it is time to amend the pension laws and regulations.

"We need to postpone the mandatory retirement age to overcome the possible collapse of the pension system," Zhu said.

Zhu's appeal was warmly received by elders, especially those in high positions like senior officials and those with expertise, like professors and doctors. They argue that they still can effectively work another five to 10 years.

But young workers say elders should step down when they reach 60 in order to help lower unemployment rates. It is estimated that there are 40 million recent graduates and other newcomers to the labor market that cannot find a job today.



Two retired men chat with each other and play with their pet birds in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. This has become a routine daily program for retirees to kill time. Most healthy elders say they prefer to continue working, while many young people object.

CFP Photo

Background:

China did not have a national pension system before 1992. Before that, elders relied on their families and children after retirement.

After 18 years, the system remains flawed. Many of the retirees who are receiving pensions have never paid into it. The pension pool has not gained critical

mass whereby it can support future generations indefinitely.

In recent years, the central government decided to expand the pension system to cover elders in villages. Under the current plan, rural elders can receive up to a few hundred yuan per month.

A large number of officials are

not part of the system yet receive pensions from the government budget, according to the practice of their predecessors. But the central government is trying to persuade them to participate in the pension system. There are an estimated 30 million such cases in the country.

A great number of young workers who have recently moved to the city refuse to pay into the system, saying they can hardly support themselves today, so why worry about tomorrow? There are at least 100 million people who should be paying into the system but are not.

Expert's view:

It has only been 18 years since the pension fund was set up, so it's still improving, even if it is currently not strong enough to support the rapidly increasing population of elders in our country.

Part of the problem is that investment channels are still very narrow, said Dai Xianglong, chairman of the national pension fund.

So far the fund is only allowed

to invest in national bonds, properties and private equities. The annual revenue of these investments has been 7.7 percent over the past decade. Dai said this week that they will expand their investments to Hong Kong, buying stocks and private equities. They are also trying to invest in the domestic stock market.

It is very important to keep the investment revenue of the pen-

sion fund at a certain level to combat inflation.

Meanwhile, we should also understand and realize a very important point here: your pension is the basic guarantee for your life after retirement. The government has no responsibility and obligation to take care of you after you retire. If you expect a better life after retiring, invest as early as possible.

We should educate ourselves in risk management, diversify our portfolio and invest in different sectors, in business, properties, bonds, equities and shares.

Of course, the first thing we should do is work hard and earn enough money to invest. The earlier we do this, the better we'll be.

— Huang Yan, financial analyst, Shanghai Pudong Development Bank (SPDB)

Comment:

Flexible retirement should be encouraged

We should not change the law at random. Instead, the central government should encourage employers and employees to adopt flexible retirement ages. Young people must understand jobs rely on your abilities, not your ability to move elderly people out!

— Liang Li, Institute of Welfare Study, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security

I agree with postponing
I fully agree with postpon-

ing retirement ages. The government cannot afford the huge cost and pressure of pension funds. We need more people to join the system and we need them to pay more years into the system.

— Auntie Zhou,
retired worker in Beijing

Perfect the system and fund

I don't agree with postponing retirement ages. Instead, what we should do is further improve and perfect the pension system, forcing all employees to join the system to improve the funding of the system.

Meanwhile, we should further improve pension fund investments to counter possible problems in the future.

— Yang Yasui, director, Center of Social Welfare Studies, Tsinghua University

Pension is the bottom!

Elders, as well as those in younger generations, should understand that pensions are the baseline support for your retired life. We should understand the necessity of investing or opening our own businesses during earlier years to secure a high quality of

life after retirement.

— Andrew Wenn,
student from Canada

Try to cover more people

We can have more alternative ways to secure and perfect the pension fund and system, rather than only postponing retirement, such as investing more and covering more people with low income, etc. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security clarified Wednesday that it's not the time to adjust the retirement age.

— Bai Tianliang, observer



By Han Manman

Crazy Bake has established itself among the expat community for its German baked goods, but few know that behind the strudels and cheesecakes is a healthy cause.

The baked goods are made almost daily by a group of ill patients from Beijing Chaoyang Mental Health Center, a private institution that houses 190 patients on the northern outskirts of Beijing.

While China is still in the dark ages when it comes to treatment of mental health problems, Crazy Bake is setting a good example for hospitals that seek to provide mentally ill patients a path to a normal life.

Local shop helps mentally ill patients gain self-esteem



Patients at Beijing Chaoyang Mental Health Center are employed by Crazy Bake to make German pastries almost every morning.

Photos by Zuma Cui

Inside a psychiatric hospital

Every Friday, Yvonne Gerig arrives at Chaoyang Mental Health Service Center at 9 am. After the 60 ordered loaves of bread are made, the Swiss woman will take one or two of the patients with her downtown to deliver the bread to a local German school.

"Hey, how are you today?" says one of the six bakers.

Shi Yilong, a 41-year-old schizophrenic who has lived in the institute for 10 years, is one of its most experienced bakers.

Tall, talkative and fluent in English, Shi does not give any outward signs of being mentally ill.

"Learning to make bread was not easy at the beginning," he said while squatting in a corner with a chef's hat and smoking a cigarette. "It took us months to learn."

Shi had just finished his day's work and was waiting for the bread to cool so that he could wrap the loaves for delivery. After five years of baking, Shi can make various Western breads that Gerig believes surpass the quality of many professional bakers.

Though Shi admits that from time to time he still suffers from anxiety, fear and despair without medicine, his condition has improved. He is happier and more confident about himself and finds it easier to communicate with others thanks to his work at the bakery, which gives him a sense of purpose.

Setting up this bread-making operation was a way of shifting treatment away from drugs and toward a more holistic approach, says Yang Yun, head of the institute.

As the first private mental health institute in the city, the center offers housing and medication for those who suffer from conditions such as dementia, depression, schizophrenia and mental retardation, Yang says.

"Most of our patients have gone through treatment at hospitals," Yang says. "But they still have mental problems, and their families can't take care of them."

Families pay on average 1,000 to 1,200 yuan per month per patient, which is about a third of the cost of a state-run mental health institute.

Crazy Bake

Gerig has lived in Beijing for 15 years, and helping mentally ill patients has been part of her work since she established Crazy Bake in 2005 with fellow German Natascha Prigge. She rarely takes a break, though she will in November to have her third child.

During these years, many foreign volunteers have come and gone; only Gerig and



Yvonne Gerig (middle) teaches patients to make Western-style baked bread.



Shi Yilong (left) said he is happier and more confident after years of working in the bakery.

Prigge have stayed the course.

In 2005, after a period of volunteer work, the two friends tried thinking of ways to help patients work on their own. After some discussion, they came up with the idea of the bakery.

"We were looking for an occupation where they could work all year round," Gerig says, "and baking is something that is easy to learn, easy to handle and most importantly, doesn't involve things like knives."

Gerig and Prigge redecorated some hospital rooms to look like kitchens, furnished with industrial ovens, stoves, mixers and supplies, and began teaching patients how to make rolls, bagels, cinnamon buns and other baked goods.

Since then, a group of six patients work in the kitchen every morning from Tuesday to Saturday.

Gerig says the patients have fun baking, and when they do it well it gives them valuable confidence. They can also make some money out of it — every patient gets 260 yuan per month, some of which is used to buy facilities for the center. It makes them feel "respected and valued," Gerig says. "It's a great thing for them both mentally and physically."

Gerig says the bakery's current sales channels are international schools, organizations and some Western-style cafes.

"Almost all of our clients are Western-

ers. We hope to attract more Chinese," Gerig says, adding that she and Prigge have plans to start a noodle project that would target Chinese clients.

"I think the noodle project may help more Chinese understand these patients and raise awareness to help them," says Gerig, who feels many Chinese are afraid of those with mental illnesses. "If people could see that [the mentally ill] can lead a normal life as well, that may change their attitudes."

Asked how she can continue helping patients after all these years, Gerig says, "I have a very good life here. I have two healthy children, I have a good husband. I think I have some responsibility to give something back to society."

The struggle for Gerig is to find more distribution outlets and for more people to rally behind her cause.

A social problem

Crazy Bake is just one of the avenues the institute provides patients wanting a normal life. Patients have also been introduced to embroidery and other commercially viable crafts.

Since 1999, when the institute opened, the number of patients has increased from 60 to 190.

Yang admits that even if patients are reintroduced to society, a hard life awaits.

Foremost among their challenges is how the public perceives them.

"Many people tend to think of the mentally ill as completely insane or crazy, leaving them little room to rehabilitate or recover," Yang says. "In fact, many of them are normal most of the time — ailments such as schizophrenia and depression only manifest themselves periodically."

Even though the mentally ill sometimes show dangerous tendencies, it is unfair to deprive them of job opportunities, Yang says. An ideal solution would be to let them make contributions to society under medical supervision, ensuring they receive timely medication and counseling support.

Besides raising public awareness, Yang says the government plays a key role in improving the lives of the mentally ill, such as providing a working environment for the recovery of patients and more support for non-profit organizations like her center.

Gerig says Crazy Bake may inspire the local government to help patients reintegrate into society.

"This way, we at least get more people employed," Gerig says. "Even if it's a small job that's only a couple of hours a day, at least they have something to do. It changes the way they behave."

Over the past decade, mental health has emerged as a salient social problem in China.

Data released by the National Center for Mental Health showed that in 2009, more than 100 million people were diagnosed with mental health problems and 16 million were deemed "severely mentally ill."

A recent Peking University report revealed that the number of medical professionals working with mental illness in China is 43 times less than that in the US.

But the situation is expected to improve as the government has come to understand the scale of the problem and has begun taking serious measures. The Ministry of Health announced this June that it is planning to renovate or expand 550 psychiatric hospitals and departments across the country over the next two years.

Yang sees this move as an indication that China's beginning to see the light in mental health issues.

With increasing government support and public understanding, she envisions that one day her center might be able to expand into a community where the mentally ill can live, work, settle down and lead a happy, prosperous home life. That's the hope, she says.

Canadian entrepreneurs satisfied with Chinese business environment

By Chu Meng

The Canada China Business Council (CCBC), which was established in Toronto and Beijing in 1978, has played an important role in facilitating trade between Canadian and Chinese businesses in the private sector.

On October 13 in Beijing, at its biggest annual event, the Annual General Meeting and Finance Forum, the CCBC will present its second Canada China Business Excellence Awards to recognize businesses that have played a leading role in expanding and nurturing ties.

The forum will be part of CCBC's celebration of exactly 40 years of Chinese-Canadian diplomatic relations.

And for Cheng Yingfeng, it will be another milestone: his first major event as managing director of CCBC in China. He took the post this past Monday.

A promising future

Cheng is a Chinese-Canadian who speaks with a Beijing accent. He was born in Beijing in 1966 and graduated from Peking University's medical school in 1990. That year, he received a scholarship to study in Europe. Eventually he ended up at McGill University in Montreal, where he majored in international business.

"Beijing was always my 'hometown' in my heart," Cheng said. "In fact, like many overseas Chinese, I became more aware of my heritage after I left. We no longer took our cultural roots for granted."

Cheng returned to China 10 years ago.

"Being a curious person, I jumped at the opportunity to gain new life experiences and at the chance to broaden my horizons," Cheng said. "I feel I was driven back to my hometown by this same curiosity, same craving to be at the forefront of the excitement and same desire to live life to the fullest."

This new director was extremely busy with meetings during his first week. Almost all

of CCBC's 300 member companies have registered for the award celebration next month.

"It is the biggest number of participants we have ever had," Cheng said at 10 pm on Wednesday, after his day's final meeting with several executives and senior government leaders from Canada and China.

"After the financial crisis, more and more Canadian companies, CCBC members and non-members, increasing their aspirations to do business in China," he said. "They feel satisfied about China's promising market and business environment for foreign investors."

According to his own experience as CEO of several multinational corporations, Cheng said that in recent years, China's business environment has become increasingly friendly for foreign companies.

He said the Canada China Business Excellence Awards were created to honor and recognize companies that excel in one of these three categories: those who have been a long-time champion in promoting Canada-China trade;

those who have in the last year completed extraordinarily successful projects; and those who have brought the best innovation into Canada-China collaboration.

"These awards aim to recognize and encourage a full spectrum of exchange between Chinese and Canadian companies, large, medium and small. They all can be shining stars in their own unique ways," Cheng said.

Safe business environment

China is the single biggest market open to foreign businesses. It provides a meaningful alternative to traditional European and American markets.

Cheng recalled an earlier forum that gave him confidence to develop his career in China.

It was at the 4th Canada China Business Forum, sponsored by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade and CCBC, held in Ottawa during

the G20 meetings. There were more than 500 Canadian and Chinese executives and entrepreneurs, plus Chinese president Hu Jintao and a delegation of high-ranking officials.

Nicholas Sonntag, executive vice president of Westport Innovations, one of Canada's leading multinational companies, said in a plenary session, "So far, we have had no negative issues while doing business in China." His company develops technology that is used to convert diesel and gasoline engines to run on natural gas, hydrogen and other cleaner fuels.

"We have seen very positive shifts in the Chinese attitude to intellectual property protection. It is a win-win situation for them," he said. Chinese businesses were quickly developing their own technological secrets and Chinese authorities were working harder to protect the intellectual property of domestic and foreign firms.

His comments were echoed by Greg Shea, managing director of Chinese operations for Research in Motion, which makes BlackBerry handsets.

"We have seen a dramatic increase in the number of patents [registered in China]. We have also seen a rise in patent litigation, most of it between Chinese corporations," he said.

In the future, with China moving up the value chain, many Canadian companies, as well as companies from around the world, expect China to be a source of capital and innovation: an economic superpower not only in terms of scale but also in quality and sustainability.

Building Beijing into a world trade city

Beijing Municipal Government is planning to build the capital into a "World City." From an international trade perspective, Cheng and CCBC members are trying to find out what software and hardware requirements a World City should meet.



Cheng Yingfeng

Photo provided by CCBC

Beijing's infrastructure is contemporary by any standard, Cheng said. If Beijing can coordinate its resources and create an environment that is distinctly its own, people will see the city as a major destination.

"Beijing's unique identity drew me back," Cheng said. "And I believe that this will also draw foreign investors."

Being an inland political center, Beijing can become an air- and rail-based logistics hub for northeast Asia, Cheng said. Education, high-tech innovation and telecommunications all have potential to develop further.

Cheng also gave Beijing's municipal government a suggestion.

"Once a niche brand image is established, people and businesses will come," he said. "The Beijing government has a great team and system focused on facilitating foreign investment here. Their 'Express Lane System,' which helps foreign investors better develop their business here, is very innovative."

"However, it is extremely competitive out there. Having more frequent overseas trade missions will definitely help them reach a bigger audience."

Foreign diplomats delve into Chengdu cuisine



This was the first time for many diplomats to make Sichuan cuisine.
Photo provided by China.com

By Han Manman

More than 80 embassy officials and their family from 60-plus countries gathered at a local Sichuan restaurant last weekend to participate in a two-day event aimed at promoting communication and understanding.

Several Sichuan chefs led cooking classes and taught participants to cook Kung Pao chicken, a representative of Sichuan Province.

Participants then competed to see who could make the best Kung Pao chicken. In the first group stage of competition, Sumyatian Victor, counselor at the Russian embassy, was the first to complete his dish. He raised his arms and shouted, "I'm No. 1!"

The winner, however, was the ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Amel Kovacevic, and his wife, as determined by a panel of judges.

A big lover of cooking, the ambassador said he really enjoys different Chinese cuisine from different cities. He especially loves Chengdu cuisine, which is popular all over the world.

Alejandro Martinez Peralta, second secretary and consul from Mexico's embassy, said he took his family to participate in this event not just to learn how to cook Chinese dishes, but also with the hope that his children can gain a better understanding of the country's food and culture.

The two-day event was a part of the 2010 Friendship Communication of Ambassadors and Madams on Knowing Chinese

Culture, held by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

The annual event is now in its ninth year and aims to promote communication among diplomats and enhance their understanding of Chinese culture, the organizers said.

Different cultural elements are highlighted each year. Past themes have included traditional Chinese fashion parades and tea ceremonies, and this event has been held in more than 100 cities and regions.

This year's participants will travel to Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province, later this month. They will whip up Kung Pao chicken and leave a handprint on a memorial wall to mark the occasion.

TED shares ideas about city and art development

By Li Zhixin

TEDxFactory798, an independently organized TED (Technology Entertainment and Design) project featuring some of Beijing's leading expat visionaries and storytellers, showcased its ideas on the city's urban planning and art development at a forum themed "Outside – Insider" at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) last Saturday.

Megan and KC Vienna Connolly, two gregarious sisters from New York City, and their Beijing-based "curatorial lab" ChART Contemporary were the highlights of the event.

KC, a sculptor and educator, and Megan, who has a background in East Asian studies and art history, set up ChART in 2008 with the goal of "bringing art and common people together."

In April 2009, the sisters began a series of temporary artistic projects known as Open House, which take art out of the galleries and hang them in residential spaces that are either up for rent, for sale or tagged for demolition. Each series presents a new set of works by an emerging Chinese artist.



Megan and KC Vienna Connolly talked about their outdoor art projects in China.

Photo provided by TED

"We believe art belongs to everyone, so we decided to bring art outside of galleries for those who are too shy and timid to enter," Megan said. "It is important that people outside of galleries and the art scene are able to touch and experience art."

Over the past two years, their operation has grown to include curatorial projects, art education programs for students, collector

tours and specialist advice for those who need a knowledgeable guide in the vast world of Chinese art.

The sisters also take care of visiting delegations from museums and galleries, academics, writers, corporate groups and often just independent travelers. They divide them into three categories depending on their level of interest: curious, committed and fanatic. For the fanatics, they develop programs that include studio visits, collection advice and dinners where they can spend time getting to know artists.

"We are sisters, but we are also good friends. And we balance each other out – KC is interested in education and I've always been interested in anthropology, listening to stories," Megan said. "So between the two of us, we try to create some kind of conduit between people and art, but also a window between people outside China and the fantastic art and artists here."

Two other speakers shared their work experiences and ideas as well: Neville Mars, chief architect of MARS-1 Space Design, a Beijing-based office

engaged in sustainable design on all scales, from green furniture to buildings to cities, and Brendan McGetrick, an independent writer and designer.

Mars, 35, focused on the issue of sustainable development in China. He said with so much construction going on and with entire cities being planned from scratch, China believes it can design and achieve its future landscape as it desires; however, the reality is much less predictable.

"A city like Beijing reveals a brutal force of erratic expansion that dominates its growth," he said. "The result will probably be an urban monster that just gets bigger and more congested with every new compound. So sustainability is becoming a must now, but the question is can we still tame the beast?"

McGetrick, 32, emphasized the collaborative aspect of construction and talked about how within each work there is an effort to incorporate external voices to help place it within context and give a fuller understanding of how art and architecture interact.

Event

Gaobeidian Mid-Autumn street fair

To take advantage of the sunshine in the last days of summer and celebrate the upcoming Mid-Autumn Festival, Gaobeidian Antique Furniture Street is throwing a street fair and offering special end-of-summer sales and handicrafts made by local artists. In the market, people can see workshops for demonstrating artists' unique skills. On display will be egg shell mosaics, golden paintings and carvings. Also offered are different kinds of entertainment for young and old, like street fishing and face painting. Moon cake stands, a German sausage car and other gourmet booths will serve food.

Where: Gaobeidian Antique Furniture Street, outside East Third Ring Road; turn right at the Gaobeidian exit of the Jing-tong expressway, then drive south (near Gaobeidian station on subway Batong line); Chaoyang District

When: September 18, 9 am
- 6 pm
Tel: 8575 5557
Cost: Free

Multimedia art course for kids

Beijing Color Studio is offering a painting course that allows children ages 5 to 16 to explore their artistic abilities. During each class, the children will set challenges and goals, then use various materials to achieve them. Children are encouraged to use a wide range of multimedia (acrylic, pencil, ink and charcoal) and be free-thinking when creating their artwork. In the final lesson they will produce a final canvas piece.

Where: Beijing Color Studio, 2 Dongwuhuan Lu, Chaoyang District (near 798 art district)

When: Ends December 4, every Saturday, 9-11:30 am
Tel: 13671295154
Cost: 150 yuan for each class, sibling discounts offered

Jane Goodall "Gombe 50" celebration dinner

This event celebrates environmental conservation and wildlife protection. Jane Goodall will present a speech at the evening dinner. The British primatologist is best known for her 45-year study of social and family interactions of wild chimpanzees in Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania. Guests will be treated to a cocktail hour and a delicious meal prepared from fresh produce grown in organic farms. There will be entertainment for kids and a charity raffle.

Where: 1725 Courtyard, 6 Shuangjiaojie Xixiang, Chaoyang District
When: September 17, 5:30-9:30 pm
Tel: 6778 3115
Cost: 700 yuan, 350 yuan for children under 12

(By Liang Meilan)

Superleague racing on the streets of Shunyi



By Wang Yu

The Superleague Formula series is coming to the Asia-Pacific area for the first time. The three-day event will kick off on October 8 at Shunyi Olympic Rowing-Canoeing Park, with tracks set on the street both inside and around the park. Superleague Formula is an open-wheel single-seat motor racing league that started in 2008 at Donington Park, UK. Unlike other Formula series, teams are sponsored by Association Football (FA) clubs and named after soccer teams. There are 19 teams in the league, including Beijing Guoan, last year's China Football Association Super League champion.

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to:
weiyi@ynet.com

I'm working on an installation made of cloth and I just ran out of my US-made dye. Do you know where I can find good dye in town?

Try Qianmen Hua Gong Yuan Liao (Qianmen Industrial Chemicals), located on 177 Qianmen Dajie, Dongcheng District, which offers a wide range of clothing dyes. For more information, call the store at 6303 1480.

My 4-year-old son is coming to town for a month and I'm looking for a day-care center in the CBD that can care for him while I work. I'd prefer one where the babysitters speak English and where there are other foreign children.

There is a day-care center in the CBD called The Familiar, popular among Korean and Japanese families. Besides looking after children while their parents work, the center also has activities that parents and children can do together to promote bonding. Call 5869 2904 for more information.

I need to order a few more pairs of contact lenses before coming to Beijing. Is it possible to order them in Beijing? If so, does anyone know if it's more expensive than in Western countries? Would I need an eye test or can I just give them my prescription?

Contact lenses are more expensive in the Chinese mainland. If you can bring more pairs from home, do it, or buy them in Hong Kong if you have a layover there. The good news is it's easy to order them in Beijing: just give your prescription to someone at an eyeglass store and they will find the appropriate lens for you.

(By Liang Meilan)

Measles vaccines available citywide until October 8

A nationwide campaign to inoculate 100 million children against measles began last Saturday. From September 11 to 20, the local health bureau will dispatch thousands of medical staff members to 491 schools and kindergartens to vaccinate schoolchildren.

Many expat parents are wondering whether their children need the vaccines. According to the local health bureau, the vaccine is voluntary and free. School and medical staff will notify each child's parents in advance.

According to a World Health Organization (WHO) announcement, the measles vaccine is safe and highly effective. But as with most vaccines, some children may have mild reactions to the vaccination, such as fever. This usually is a sign that the vaccine is working.

A child who has previously received a measles vaccination can be given additional doses without any side effects. "The immune system can easily manage multiple or repeated vaccinations," Dr Michael O'Leary, WHO representative in China, was quoted as saying in the WHO announcement.

WHO said 52,000 people in



From September 11 to 20, the local health bureau will send thousands of medical workers to vaccinate children in 491 schools and kindergartens.

Liang Fuying/CFP

China contracted measles last year, accounting for 86 percent of all measles cases in WHO's Western Pacific region.

Vaccinating every child, even those who have been vaccinated in the past, is essential to stopping the virus. Using this WHO-developed strategy has enabled countries in Central and South America to eliminate measles, WHO said.

The nation's measles immu-

nization project has reached 80 percent of the population since 1978. However, measles cannot be eliminated in a country until more than 95 percent of the population has immunity.

In Beijing, the campaign targets children aged 8 months to 14 years and involve an estimated 1.66 million children.

The health bureau said children who have received other vaccines within the last three

months or who currently have a cold or fever should wait a month before getting the measles vaccine.

Any child who misses the vaccination window from September 11 to 20 can get free shots in 500 different sanitation and anti-epidemic stations before October 8.

To find your closest station, call 123120.

(By Annie Wei)

International Tourism Festival coming

By Li Zhixin

The 12th Beijing International Tourism Festival will open this Sunday. Nearly 2,000 performers from more than 22 countries and regions will participate in a parade at the opening ceremony, which will be held at Qianmen Dajie.

The festival also has three stages at Xidan Cultural Square, Scenic Avenue in Olympic Green and Solana Lifestyle Shopping Park to showcase a comprehen-

sively new image of the capital.

In order to add more fun to the festival, 15 vintage cars from world-famous brands in Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Malaysia will also be paraded.

Zhang Huiqiang, director of Beijing Tourism Administration (BTA), said she believes tourism will emerge as Beijing's pillar industry.

According to BTA, Beijing welcomed 80.3 million tourists and

2.31 million were foreigners. Total tourism increased 8.2 percent over the same period from last year. Income from tourism reached 128.4 billion yuan, an increase of 14.1 percent.

Zhang says this year's tourism carnival will present Beijing's travel industry's post-Olympic image while paying tribute to the 61st anniversary of the People's Republic of China.

Beijing International Tourism

Festival was first held in 1998. Since then, more than 140 countries and regions have attended the festival. The festival aims to build itself into an international brand much like the Running of the Bulls in Pamplona, Spain, Oktoberfest in Munich and the Brazilian Carnival.

It is praised as one of China's top 10 most influential festivals by the International Festivals and Events Association (IPEA).

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Pinter's absurdist masterpiece revived in Beijing

By Liang Meilan
Noble laureate Harold Pinter gender warfare play *The Homecoming*
Naturally, its original Broadway revived ever since as numerous
But the enduring work has ne



I'm still too inexperienced to truly fully interpret Pinter's play. So this time I chose to focus on the universal human spirits of love and hate as the main plot, and down-played its other elements like criticism of religion and Western culture.



The Homecoming

When: September 18 - 21, 7:30 pm
Where: People's Art Experimental Theater, 3/F, Capital Theater, 22 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District
Admission: 80 yuan, 40 yuan for students
Tel: 6524 9847

rpiece

has a long history of shaking up society's households. In 1964, his domestic *oming* became the center of incredible controversy in the theater scene. ay production won the 1967 Tony Award for Best Play. The masterpiece has been productions fitted to each country and region. ever made it to China.



Pinter laces ordinary life with extreme psychological disorders that surface as his characters enter into the dark in *The Homecoming*.
Photos by Jeffrey Lau

Pei Kuishan, 28, a promising young director, is staging a localized version of this complex play version this weekend. But even he doesn't know whether the horrors of a Pinter household can be faithfully recast in a Chinese mold.

Several wooden tables and chairs in a plain building with no air conditioning. That was the rehearsal hall where Pei's crew spent 10 hours a day for the last month.

The team of five men and one woman was preparing *The Homecoming* for its debut at a Pinter commemoration to be held September 18 at the Beijing Fringe Festival.

The story unfolds in a shabby house in North London where Max, the father, lords over two sons, Lenny, a pimp, and Joey, a slow-witted yet aspiring boxer. His third son Teddy has left to live in the US and Max's brother, the chauffeur Sam, now lives with them.

But their actions and relationships appear strange, ready to explode at any moment from unspoken tensions.

This antagonistic male environment is shaken one day by the homecoming of Teddy and his wife Ruth, the main character of the play. She teases her husband's brothers and father into bloody fighting, which in the end drives Teddy away and finds her a place in the family.

That absurd and biting plot fascinated actor-director Pei, who made it his mission to create a Chinese interpretation of the play: one that combines all manners of mental disorders from split personalities to an Oedipus complex in one script.

Like most Pinter creations, *The Homecoming* defies easy analysis. He laces ordinary life with extreme psychological disorders that surface as his characters enter into the dark.

"The frequently used pauses in conversation (40 times) are a unique tool Pinter uses to demonstrate crisis. Some are imperceptible, but meaningful. Without accurate timing and posing, the information won't be communicated," Pei says.

Pei fell in love with *The Homecoming* during high school, and since then he was inspired to act in and direct 16 plays. But Pinter remains elusive and challenging.

"I'm still too inexperienced to truly fully interpret Pinter's play," he said. "So this time I chose to focus on the universal human spirits of love and hate as the main plot, and downplayed its other elements like criticism of religion and Western culture," he says.

Even were it not for the problems with interpretation, those criticisms would have been lost on the Chinese audience. To appeal to Beijingers, Pei tossed out the old British costumes, opting for common clothes available at the market to create more realistic characters.

Pinter is a name rarely uttered in the mainland theater scene, though his sarcasm and powerful criticism have won him an otherwise international reputation. Only three Pinter plays were ever staged in Beijing, and all of these were in the 1990s.

Part of that may have something to do with the critics, who noted that Pinter's stories were extremely complex and layered, and that they exposed issues of sex and violence in a raw yet aesthetically stylized manner.

His plays also tend to downplay challenges of morality in family life. "His scenes of incest and infanticide are considered unacceptable to most Chinese people, so I have to cut many of the more sensual or bloody moments," he said.

Ren Suxi, who will play Ruth, said she agreed with the director's reshaping of the "extreme" plots.

"Ruth is a sphinx-like woman who has been interpreted as a whore, a feminist and a misogynistic who kills her own child. Despite being mired in so much evil, her actions come across as completely understandable. I had nightmares while preparing for the role. She demands a certain degree of weakening for a relatively conservative Chinese audience," she says.

But morals aside, *The Homecoming* may fit better in China than many would expect. Fast-paced city life and extreme housing and work pressures have stressed people in ways not entirely dissimilar to Max's house.

"In directing the play, I try to explore and find ways to deal with these mental crises, which seem like today's real urban ills taken to their logical extreme," Pei says.

But plays with a message are rarely the ones that draw a full house.

"Looking at the domestic theater industry, we can see the eagerness for instant success and quick profit is resulting in a descent into stereotyped comedies and love dramas," he says.

In Pei's view, social development and education are two of the most significant functions of a play. Unlike strictly commercial directors, he insists on exploring artistic ideals and social roles. The minute a director starts chasing profits, he stops being a director and becomes an entertainment producer, he says.

In 2006, Pei, who graduated from Renmin University's diplomacy program, decided to change his life and went for post-graduate studies at the Central Academy of Drama. The change prompted him and his wife Zhou Qiao, also a director, to start the Xuge Club, a theater club for his idealistic explorations.

Last year, the club staged an adaptation of pioneering Swedish playwright August Strindberg's *A Dream Play*, which was a huge success and resulted in its invitation to the 2009 Fringe festival.

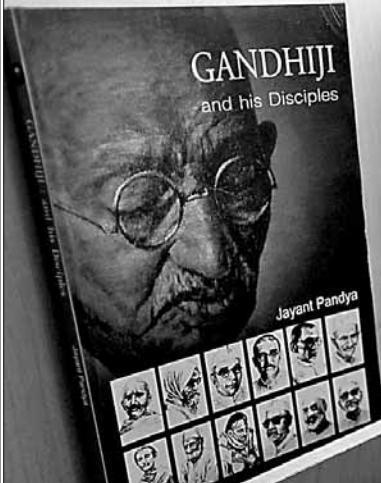
Initiated in 2008 by Meng Jinghui, one of the country's most influential experimental directors, the event collects plays directed by young directors.

"Its significance lies in its role as a platform – free of the stress of ticket sales – where young directors can work on their dreams, experiment and make mistakes. It's a chance to take risks and learn about their own strong and weak points," Tao Zi, a play researcher, says.

"There are two kinds of young people who go to the festival. One kind uses it to test drive commercial plays to see their chances of market acceptance; the other uses the festival to express purely personal artistic ideas and to find new ways to make these resonate with an audience," Pei says.

Pei says he belongs to the latter group.

India publishers enthusiastic for Chinese lit



By He Jianwei

With writers' profiles etched in relief on its walls, the Indian Pavilion at the Beijing International Book Fair 2010 (BIBF) was decorated like a typical rural Indian courtyard.

As the country of honor at the book fair, India brought publications on Buddha and Buddhism to emphasize the common thread connecting the histories and cultures of China and India.

"[These books] not only connect India and China through a shared Buddhist tradition but also echo our country's contemporary endeavors to find a common platform of social, economic, cultural and political dialogue with China," said Satish Kumar, director of India's National Book Trust (NBT).

NBT, a publishing house founded in 1957 by the country's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, organized 27 major publishers to attend the book fair, bringing their own texts on sci-

ence and technology, the social sciences, education and literature for children and adults.

"Unlike other countries, India is a country of many languages and many cultures. Our publishing industry produces publications in more than 30 languages, including English," Kumar said.

In fact, India is the third largest publisher of English-language books after the US and the UK – an achievement that has secured the country's invite to many international book fairs, such as the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2006, Paris Book Fair in 2007 and London Book Fair in 2008.

As part of Kumar's effort to win Indian-Chinese collaborations, 18 Indian publishers and 10 Chinese attended a roundtable discussion on the publishing trade and the exchange, copy-right and translation business.

"China is a large market for Indian publishers and I think Chinese books have great poten-

tial in the India market," Mahesh Golani, owner of Kwality Book Company, said. "The BIBF is a beginning for the future of cooperation between our publishers."

While the publishers all supported collaboration, they did not share an interest in the same categories of books.

Most Chinese publishers preferred to import Indian books about literature, philosophy, religion and art, but Indian publishers were more interested in sending books about science and technology to China.

"We want to collaborate with good Chinese writers in the fields of science and technology. We are neighbors and we are eager to know modern China through its advanced technologies," said Sukumar Das, managing director of NCBA Exports.

Indian publishers predicted a promising market for Chinese children's literature, IT and computer technology.

"We are not sure that Chi-

nese children's books can be popular in India, and we think their local IT books tend to be better than our own," said Liu Yongchun, director of China National Publication Import and Export Corporation. "There are very few types of books we are interested in exporting to India."

Golani agreed that Chinese publishers have long been disinterested in the Indian market. "No Chinese publishers have attended the Calcutta Book Fair. But international book fairs are a good platform for them to present Chinese books," Golani said. "The Beijing International Book Fair provides a good opportunity for our two countries' publishers to clearly discuss the future market."

Other works featured at the pavilion were those by Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, a commemoration of the 150th anniversary of his birth, and a series of books on and by Nehru to mark 60 years of Sino-Indian diplomatic ties.

American boy meets Vietnamese girl

By Charles Zhu

David Rabe, the Tony Award-winning playwright, at 70 turns out *Girl by the Road at Night*, a boy-meets-girl love story about two young people from opposite ends of the world caught in the Vietnam War.

After Rabe was discharged from the US Army in 1967, he was given a grant to write plays about the Vietnam War. The result of the grant was a quartet of plays that would make him famous: *The Basic Training of Pavlo Hummel*, *Sticks and Bones*, *The Orphan and Streamers*.

"But oddly enough, it was a novel rather than a play that I wanted to work on," he wrote, though even when he was in Vietnam he found it difficult to convey in prose what he was experiencing.

The girl is Quach Ngoc Lan, the daughter of a Vietnamese farmer. Her father is dead and her family is scattered.

Lan works as a bargain-base-ment prostitute, servicing loutish GIs at a roadside brothel. She is

deft in dealing with her madam, who runs a "full service" car wash where American soldiers come to have Jeep cleanings and sex. Sometimes her clients "forget" to pay, but the money she does earn she sends to her family.

While at the brothel, she still dreams of her innocent childhood days frolicking on buffalo carts through lush green rice fields with her brother. She is as much at the mercy of war's vicissitudes as the GIs and the South Vietnamese soldiers are.

The boy is Pfc. Joseph Whitaker, a truck mechanic from rustic Wisconsin. Being far from home and family amid an ever-changing world of strangers, the brawny, blond farm boy is a good son to his elderly father.

Whitaker is impulsive, quick-tempered and simple-minded in his pursuit of sex. He tends to be violent during his frequent binge drinking, which makes him first stupid and crude, then oblivious. He was drafted in his early 20s and a time when he had never

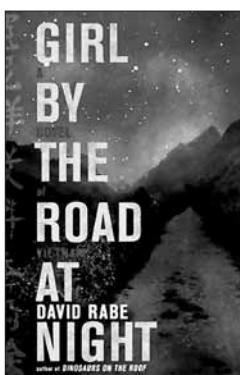
heard of Vietnam. After a spell at Fort Meade, Maryland, he gets sent out to the war zone.

Whitaker meets Lan by chance and becomes one of her customers until something happens between them. It is not quite love, but is a great deal more than commercial sex. That bond opens Whitaker's mind and heart to new thinking, even the idea that he's capable of overcoming his own faulty nature.

During a conflict, Whitaker attempts to rescue Lan from two menacing Vietnamese soldiers.

But the girl does not pay attention to a delicate warning from her uncle and pays a terrible price. Rabe describes the scene in a single paragraph that is a wonderful example of laconism. It is executed like the sudden explosive thrust of a razor-sharp dagger; you don't know you've been hit until you see the blood.

In a brief afterward, Rabe says the tale was inspired by *The Tale of Kieu*, an early-19th-century epic by Vietnamese poet Nguyen Du.



Girl by the Road at Night
By David Rabe, 240pp, Simon & Schuster, \$23

Nguyen's original title was *A New Cry From a Broken Heart*, chosen to show his poem as a wild cry flung against social evils – a cry to break the heart. This novel is Rabe's cry for human dignity, for attention to the devastating effects of war and on the psychology and emotions of both soldiers and civilians.

Timezone 8 book listing

Timezone 8 is a Hong Kong-based publisher, distributor and retailer of books on contemporary art, architecture, photography and design. This week, it recommends three new titles to *Beijing Today* readers.



Jean Bernard Koeman: Everything Beautiful is Far Away

Edited by Els Silvants, 144pp, Timezone 8 \$45

Sculptor and installation artist Jean Bernard Koeman has been shooting photos of stunning landscapes for 20 years while traveling the world for his art. This volume includes 80 photographs, a road map and an essay by Carol Lu.



Hong Lei : Chinese Artists of Today

By Li Xianting, Zhu Qi and Liu Ding, 213pp, Timezone 8 and Today Art Museum, \$90

Photographer Hong Lei, born in 1960 in Changzhou, Jiangsu Province, fuses a variety of photographic techniques including digital collage and hand dyeing. Drawing on Song Dynasty (960-1279) painting styles, which utilized round silk fans, Hong updates these familiar historical works by juxtaposing traditional elements with tropes and techniques drawn from advertising.



Wei Qingji

Edited by Lin Dong and Lin Nan, 136pp, Timezone 8, \$38

Beijing-based Wei Qingji resuscitates the centuries-old practice of ink and wash painting. His style flies in the face of any questions about the relevance of this tradition, while managing to obliquely address contemporary social concerns.

(By He Jianwei)

Creating your fall look



● Women's fashion Colors

"Autumn seems to get shorter each year, and this year we will have only one month for wearing layers of clothes before it's time to put on the heavy, dark coats needed to bear the winter," says Twiggly Song, fashion editor of *Cosopolitan's* Chinese edition.

Every season brings a shift in tonal trends, usually deeper, lighter or bolder.

But Song says this year is time for a big change.

Camel is going to be the safest color for your closet this fall. At the latest fashion shows, Gucci, Chloé and Dries all focused on this most neutral fashion element. A camel blazer or overcoat — like those exhibited by Dries and Michael Kors — may be the best wear for Beijing's windy days.

Mixed olive is seeing a comeback in military style this year, and Burberry Prorsum is leading that trend with Jill Stuart and Rag & Bone turning out their own ideas. "All shades of olive greens, browns and fatigues will be big this fall season," Song says.

Rich purple came close to ruling the runway for its outstanding, eye-catching look. Burberry and Oscar de la Renta presented some of the most dazzling offerings. Pure colors like pale blues and bright reds should also be on your shopping list.

For the last two months before winter, consider wearing a red blazer.

"Pale blue is definitely the dark horse of this fall. It really caught our attention on the runway because it seemed unexpected for a cold season, and because its icy-cool visual effect was chic. Chanel, Tommy Hilfiger, and Marc Jacobs all have a series of cool-blue clothes worth catching," Song says.

Denim

If this summer was too hot for jeans, then now is your chance to show off the legs you spent months building at yoga.

"Fashion runs in circles, and these new cuts are actually classic styles recast in a new light. This season's paneled denim is inherited from last season's slashes and cut-outs. The autumn paneling style gives off a Western-meets-modernist vibe, as seen in the Marc by Marc

By Wang Yu

Summer is gone, and that means it's time to work on your fall look.

It's not hard to find big brands with plenty of choices for affordable clothes at Gulou and The Place. But it is hardly practical to wear every fancy product to catch up with the trends.

This week, long time fashion editor and correspondent Twiggly Song shares some tips with *Beijing Today* readers who are looking to shine this season.



Jacobs patchwork skinny jeans," Song says.

Another essential is a pair of slim, straight-cut and dark-washed jeans in the cropped '50s style with zippered ankles. Pair it with a red-white flannel shirt for a country look.

Those who are brave enough can try graffiti jeans to bring back the looks of '80s acid wash, a look increasingly popular with young women. "Just be careful to avoid wearing a shirt or jacket with a complicated design at the same time. It will look like chaos," Song says.

'70s-era high-waisted jeans are also making a comeback. Most new inspiration comes from crisp trousers and boot-cut pants. The local fashion scene already revived the boot cut a year ago: it's a look that harkens back to the most fashionable clothes present when China first began opening to the world in the late '70s. Pair it with a slim-cut shirts and Ray-Ban sunglasses for the rebel look of Beijing in the '80s.

Song also recommends jeans in camel, purple, light blue and red, the season's "in" colors.

Military

Military style seems to be redefined and augmented each season with the latest trendy elements. During summer, a lone mix-olive T-shirt looks like a bargain-bin shirt from Dongwuyuan market. However, in autumn, the addition of more clothes can help avoid this cheap look.

"The trick is to get the overall military look without looking like you've just been drafted. Pick your pieces carefully, and don't forget to mix and match the shirt with tailored cargo skinny pants, broken-in combat boots or other uncommon but utilitarian extras," Song says.



Kristin Stuart shows off her skinny jeans.

Skirt

Ladies who aren't fond of jeans or pants have other options for skirts this winter. Fashion shows of the season showed off many modest-length skirts. Marc Jacobs sent calf-length skirts down the Louis Vuitton runway and his own catwalk defining below-the-knee lengths as cool this fall.

Many of the favorite local retailers are already stocking these longer skirts.

"Let the Carrie Bradshaw in you out to play and be sure to wear your tallest shoes. You don't have to dream about having a model's body: higher heels will elongate the leg and keep you looking lean. A longer, fuller skirt should sit at your natural waist and a fitted blouse or T-shirt will highlight your body shape and make you look slim. But don't try to pair it with bat wings or dolman sleeves," Song says.



Military style seems to be redefined and augmented each season with the latest trendy elements.

● Men's fashion Suits

The best suits tend to borrow their look from the peak years of suit design. Elements of the savoir-faire of the '30s and the skinny detailing of the '60s are essential.

"But slim cuts are not just about being chic. Just think about the military look. Uniforms are never skinny — they are just designed with three crucial elements: broad shoulders, a slim waist and slim trousers," Song says.

Double-breasted suits are coming back this autumn. Buyers used to take advantage of a suit that pairs broad shoulders with a slim waist to hide a plump figure. Now these suits are designed to accent and to heighten the masculine V-shaped body.

As classic designs return, so do the vintage fabrics. Tweed, herringbone, houndstooth, pinstripes and rope-stripes can show off your taste. As for the number of buttons, the more buttons a jacket has, the taller a man looks. Single buttons should be avoided if you are not that tall, but four buttons spells disaster.

Velvet

Men's velvet usually only shows up in movies about trendy '70s culture: the age of glam rock.

"Velvet jackets or sport coats are the best accessories to buy in this fabric. A purple velvet jacket can make you look outstanding," Song says.

As for outerwear, if you want to invest in a velvet overcoat then it should be low-sheen and dark. It is safe to use velvet to add some flair to a wool overcoat if you are trying to stand out, Song says.



Moisture and nutrition key for autumn skin

By Annie Wei

Beauty salons will soon start telling their customers, "In the coming two weeks, wear a mask every day after washing your face."

As the weather changes, our face gets more sensitive and feels even drier. Wearing skin-care products that provide enough nutrition is the key. Check out this season's new arrivals.



Kerastase stimuliste,

350 yuan for 125 ml

Facing immense work pressure and serious pollution, more and more people are worrying about thinning hair at a younger age. In the spring and fall, many people find their hair thinning due to weather changes. Kerastase stimuliste with aminexil, gluco-lipide, agrinine and vitamins is good for daily use. Spray it on dry hair after washing to stimulate hair growth.



Photo provided by L'oreal

Befly nail colors,

42 yuan for 5 ml

Toxic ingredients are commonly found in nail polish. Befly nail products claim to be environmentally friendly and without toxins. They are also easy to brush on the nails, dry fast, last long and are easily removed.

Photo provided by Befly



L'occitane anti-aging cream,

980 yuan for 50 ml

The latest product from L'occitane claims to use essential oil extracted from herbal hylcrysium italicum, a Mediterranean plant. It helps rebuild the facial collagen network, enhances cell vitality, lessens splash and gives your complexion a glow.

One can find cheaper imported skin care products (100 yuan or so) at high-end supermarkets like BHG at Sanlitun Village. Many imported products are not available at department store counters as they do not have heavy marketing promotions like big brands.

For the budget consumer who's too lazy to make her own mask by mixing tomatoes, eggs and flour, you can find plenty of inexpensive masks starting at less than 2 yuan at supermarkets like Tielong and Jingkelong. These masks are appropriate for everyday use after showering.

Photo provided by L'occitane



Trendy shoes

By Annie Wei

Fall has arrived and winter is not far away. It's time to select your cold-weather styles and consider updating your shoe collection.

We looked for popular trends at boutique stores, online vendors and high-end department stores like Shin Kong Place, Lane Crawford and Guomao shopping center.

Ankle booties remain in vogue, with fur or lace-ups, in refined and ladylike styles or military and utilitarian designs. Details like exposed zippers are also popular. Leopard print remains a trend but is becoming a little dated, so avoid going overboard with that print. A small leopard patch, however, can make a shoe look chic.

Chucky or wood-stacked heels are popular as they are more comfortable than stilettos. Also, you don't have to spend every second worrying about falling down.

High-high boots are another must for the winter. They can protect one's knees and allow the wearer to sport a skirt. Popular colors are deep beige, cognac, burnt orange and yellow.

Clogs are back, and you can find plenty of them from different brands at every department store. But those wooden soles aren't very comfortable, so it's hard to wear them for an extended length of time.

Suede finish in neutral tones like beige or nude looks elegant, but they might get dirty easily in Beijing. Cleaning them costs at least 100 yuan per pair, and the color fades with each cleaning.

It's said that more and more everyday shoes take inspiration from Ugg boots, as they look cozy and are crazy comfortable. You will find lots of brands that carry shoes with shearling trim.

Finally, do not forget to bring a pair of ballet flats in your bag to work. You might need them to replace your heavy, chunky and sweaty boots once you're inside a centrally-heated building.



Bally's new arrivals designed by students from Central Saint Martins College London, priced 9,500 yuan to 12,500 yuan, available at Shin Kong Plaza Photos provided by Bally



Inside China Grill

It's seafood time!

By Annie Wei

September and October are ideal for finding fat, tender and juicy seafood. *Beijing Today* scouted two restaurants for their specials.

China Grill – quality oysters from around the world

Dining at China Grill while enjoying its 360-degree view is always an amazing experience, even if the prices are as high as the building.

This season, chef Marco Ullrich is creating special oyster feasts until September 26, with oysters selected from France, Australia, US and Japan. Priced at 70 to 280 yuan per plate, they must be special.

Ullrich said although most countries have good oysters, there are noticeable differences. Oyster size depends on the weather, while taste depends on how clean and salty the water is and how much plankton these oysters eat. "The best oysters come from a bay where freshwater mixes with seawater so they are not too salty or too tasteless," Ullrich said.

Beijing Today recommends the Kumamoto oysters, which originated in Kumamoto Bay on the southernmost island of Kyushu, Japan. "They are grown in suspended floats close to the Pacific, with large amounts of fresh natural plankton," Ullrich said. "Kumamotos have highly sculptured, fluted shells with deep

cups. These cups hold large amounts of delicious nectar."

Kumamoto oysters have firm and crispy, distinctly colored meat with a fruity and slightly briny flavor.

Oysters from South Australia also have a good reputation for their quality. "These oysters are cultured in some of the cleanest, most unpolluted waters in the world. At the point of sale, oysters have a creamy appearance, fresh ocean smell and unique cupped shell filled with juicy plump meat," Ullrich said.

To bring out the oysters' flavor, Ullrich said he always likes to combine sweet oysters with stronger or even salty ingredients like caviar or seaweed salad. "Salty oysters with a sweet dressing and mild oysters, like the Kilpatrick and traditional oyster Florentine, are good for baking," he said.

Kilpatrick oysters are baked with crispy bacon and Worcestershire sauce, while traditional oyster Florentine is baked with spinach and hollandaise. "It's also good to eat a fresh oyster naturally and combine it with grilled chorizo," Ullrich said.

To pair with the oysters, China Grill recommends four kinds of wine from Greece, Spain, the US and New Zealand at discounted prices of 320 yuan to 1,100 yuan per bottle.

For people who are interested in buying their own seafood from local markets, Ullrich has some advice.

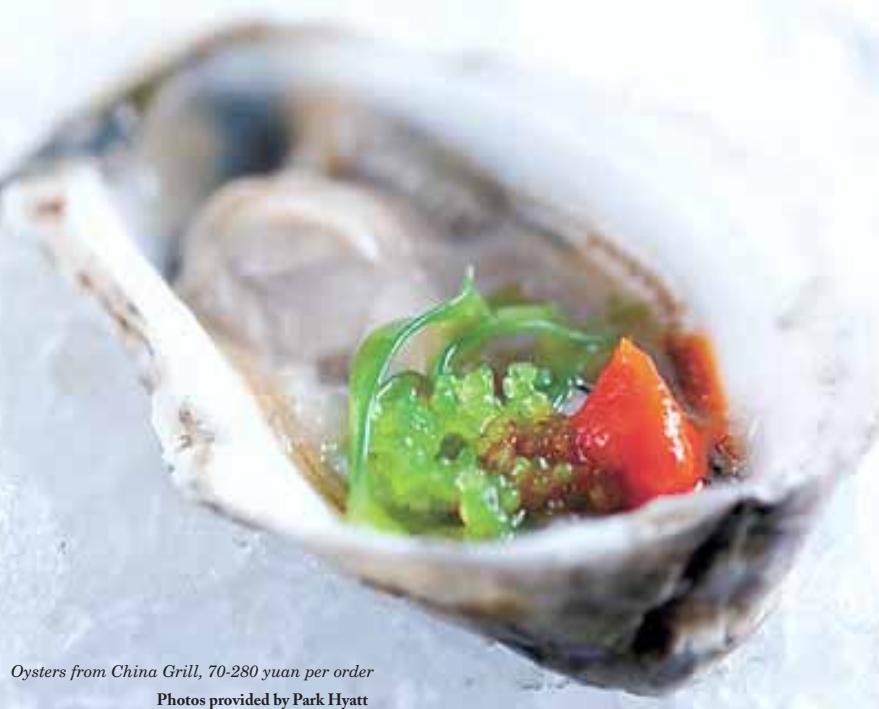
"Buy from a good supplier who brings the oysters in directly," he said. "Make sure the oysters are closed when you buy them and open one to try. Taste needs to be fresh, like the ocean or sweet watermelon."

He also emphasized the need to buy and cook oysters live. "Tap on the shells to see whether they close; the shell should be a natural sea smell, not sulfurous. Store at 1-3 C in a breathable container. Don't put them in fresh water, that will kill them."

China Grill

Where: 66th floor, Park Hyatt Beijing, 2 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 6:30-10:30 am; 11:30 am - 2:30 pm; 6-11 pm
Tel: 8567 1838



Oysters from China Grill, 70-280 yuan per order

Photos provided by Park Hyatt

Qingxiangge – for populist choices

This bungalow restaurant looks tempting every night as people can peer inside its big glass windows at a warm and happy ambiance.

Qingxiangge is one of the most popular seafood restaurants near CBD and Sanlitun and has very reasonable prices. Its most popular dishes include bayu dumplings (18 yuan for 15 pieces), with fillings of minced Spanish mackerel. Although the dumplings are wrapped a bit thick, the meat is fresh and delicious.

We also like bird shellfish (48 yuan). Meat from 1,500 grams of bird shellfish served with green bean sprouts and topped with deep-fried chili is fresh and tender.

Diners pick their food from an aquarium in the middle of the restaurant; there are no menus.



Shellfish, starting from 38 yuan

Sautéed shellfish with scallion (88 yuan), cramps (46 yuan to 88 yuan), fresh prawns (18 yuan) and sea urchins (25 yuan) are all good choices.

We found that food with samples on display, like scallop with spinach (18 yuan) and oyster

and mushroom soup (38 yuan), were not as fresh as they could have been.

For seasonal seafood, a waitress suggested scallops (6 yuan) and abalone (58 yuan).

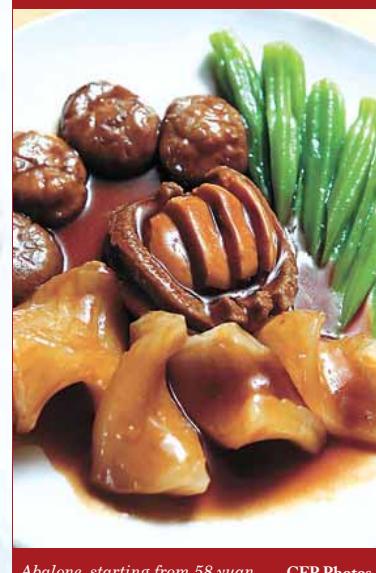
We suggest you avoid the lunchtime rush, as there is always a line of people waiting for seats.

For drinks, we like the corn juice (15 yuan), which is made of canned corn. If you drive your car to the restaurant, save your parking ticket (5 yuan), as the restaurant will deduct your fee from the final bill.

Qingxiangge

Where: 5 Zhongfangjie (walk to the end of the street to Q Bar and Chaoyang Hospital's east gate), Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am - 10 pm
Tel: 6507 9001



Abalone, starting from 58 yuan CFP Photos

Prepping for holiday music festivals

By Wang Yu

Long-time music fans who are tiring of the same lineups at music festivals have reason to celebrate this upcoming holiday season: audiences in Beijing will be treated to real stars who have established themselves in the Western music scene.

The first event is Music Fun Hill Festival, which will be held at Wanmu Binhe Park in Fangshan District from September 21 to 23. Located 15 kilometers from the urban area, the festival will be the second event around Beijing – following the Great Wall Festival held at the end of last month – that allows people to camp.

One of the big names on the lineup is Ian Brown, lead vocalist of the Brit-pop pioneer The Stone Roses, which dominated the British music scene in the late 1980s. The musician has had a great solo career, with six successful albums after The Stone Roses disbanded in 1996.

The British electric band Zero 7 will perform the finale on September 23. Founded by Sam Hardaker and Henry Binns when they were 16, the band's music ranges from acid jazz to electric soul.

British singer Mt Hudson, a new artist who is famous for his cooperation with Kanye West, has also been invited to the festival. His single "Supernova" took Chinese audiences by storm this year.

One week after the event at Fangshan, the Modern Sky Festival will happen at Haidian Park from October 2 to 4.

For most, the headline of the event is Brett Anderson, lead singer of the British band Suede (famous for the song "Hooked on a Feeling"). On the main stage at Haidian

Park, Anderson will perform Suede's classics as well as songs from his solo albums.

Blonde Redhead and The Big Pink will join the lineup and perform on the last day of the festival.

Out of the New York underground music scene, Blonde Redhead was formed in 1993 with Japanese musician Kazu Makino. As one of the popular names under the indie giant label 4AD, the band is famous for their "no wave" style, and its songs have been used in popular TV series such as *Grey's Anatomy*.

From the same label, the British electric-rock duo The Big Pink won an NME award – an annual music award given in the UK – for best act in 2009.

Music Fun Hill Festival

When: September 21-23
Where: Wanmu Binhe Park, Fangshan District

How to get there: Take bus 646, which starts from Qianmen, and get off at Libafang station; or take G4 highway to the 19B exit.

Admission: 150 yuan for single day, 320 yuan for three days.

Tel: 400 810 1887
Modern Sky Festival

When: October 2-4
Where: Haidian Park, Haidian District

Admission: 150 yuan for single day, 250 yuan for three days



5 Friday, September 17

Exhibition

View, Review – Huang Min Solo Exhibition

Huang has worked on

these paintings for more than half a year, spending over 200 days in her studio mastering the apposition of traditional Chinese landscape with people from contemporary society on the canvas. This exhibition represents a milestone in her career.

Where: Michael Schultz Gallery, 249 Caohangdi Village, Chaoyang District

When: Until October 31, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 6431 9181

Movie

Silmido (2003)

In 1968, 31 commandos from North Korea infiltrate South Korea in a failed mission to assassinate President Park Chung-hee. In retaliation, the South Korean military assembles a team of 31

social outcasts and criminals on death row, training them on the island of Silmido, to assassinate Kim Il-sung. The mission is the only way for them to win their freedom.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 8229 6153

Nightlife

Denise Ho

Hong Kong pop singer Ho produces albums to raise public awareness of social issues; *Ten Days in the Madhouse*, for example, encouraged people to learn more about mental illness. She released her latest EP, *Poem and Nonsense*, in July.

Where: The One Club, Building 5, 718 Art and Culture Zone, 19 Ganluyuan, Gaobeidian Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 8 pm
Admission: 180 yuan, 280 yuan for VIP
Tel: 5914 8087

7 Sunday, September 19

Exhibition

Another Episode – The Photography of Liu Lijie

Liu constructs a new world using his lenses, where white clouds and fish seem like they can fly and each person is on his or her own island.

Where: 798 Photo Gallery, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until November 4,

daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 6438 1784

Movie

Seven Billiard Tables (2007)

From Spanish director Gracia Querejeta, this film is about Angela and Charo, two women who struggle to survive after Angela's father – Charo's de facto husband – passes away.

Where: Broadway Cinema-

6 Saturday, September 18

Nightlife

He Gang and his band

Founded in 2005, this band

plays ballads and rock music.

Where: Weibozhiyan Club, Room 2308, 3/F North Building, SOHO Shangdu, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 9 pm
Admission: 50 yuan
advance purchase, 60 yuan at the door

Tel: 5900 0969

Exhibition



History Lessons

These exhibitions share a common concern with history, showing how, in a world that constantly exhorts people to look toward a better future, the present is always connected to the past

Where: Pekin Fine Arts, 32 Qianliang Hutong, Dongsu Bei

When: 7 pm
Admission: 15 yuan
Tel: 8459 9269

theque, 2/F Building 4, north section of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 4 pm
Admission: 40 yuan, 30 yuan for students

Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008

Nightlife

The Discounts

This Canadian band brings reggae and funk with dance hall and hip-hop vocals.

Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: Until November 15, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 6404 6297

Movie



Fortune Teller (2009)

Li Baicheng, 40, marries a deaf-mute woman named Pearl. Because of her disability, Pearl had been cruelly mistreated by her parents, so the couple leaves their hometown. Li makes his living from fortune telling and is solicited by a group of prostitutes who keep their private worries and small hopes bottled up.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 15 yuan
Tel: 8459 9269

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzihong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm
Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 6404 2711



Upcoming

Nightlife

Olaflur Arnalds

Iceland's neo-classical musician who seeks to find the balance between classical and pop brings his latest album, *And They Have Escaped the Weight of Darkness*.

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzihong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: September 20, 8 pm

Admission: 80 yuan advance purchase, 120 yuan at the door, 60 yuan for students

Tel: 6404 2711

Stage in October

Concert

Concerto Koln

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyu Lu, Xicheng District

When: October 2, 7:30 pm
Admission: 50-880 yuan
Tel: 6417 7845

Budapest Festival Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: October 4-5, 7:30 pm
Admission: 280-1,280 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Percussion Ensemble Atalaya of Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: October 4-5, 7:30 pm
Admission: 280-1,280 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Vienna Boy's Choir

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: October 16, 7:30 pm
Admission: 50-880 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Dance

Moisseyev Dance Company

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: October 1-3, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-1,280 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Chinese Folk Dance Drama: The Flower

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: October 12-13, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-380 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

The Crab Flower by Singapore's Toy Factory Theater Ensemble

Where: Oriental Pioneer Theater, 8-2 Dongdan Santiao Wangfujing, Dongcheng District

When: October 9-21, 7:30 pm
Admission: 50-120 yuan
Tel: 6275 8452

British TNT's Othello

Where: Peking University Hall, 5 Yiheyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: October 15-17, 7:30 pm
Admission: 60-380 yuan
Tel: 6275 8452

Opera

Handel Opera: Semele

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: October 24, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-880 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

(By Jackie Zhang)

Save your skin from autumn allergies

By Li Zhixin

Many people experience seasonal skin allergies when autumn begins and temperatures drop.

Seasonal sensitivity can be frustrating if you don't know the cause of your skin problems, and that can create additional stress that may aggravate the condition.

Seasonal changes threaten skin

Liu Xinyi, 28, a fashion editor, noticed the skin of her legs, neck and back becoming rough and dull. Although she regularly used skin cream, the dryness and flakiness persisted and worsened.

"Even deep-cleansing facial masks and scrubs did not improve it. In fact, they made it worse," she said.

The development of an itchy, red rash motivated her to see a doctor.

Wang Xiaolian, a dermatologist at Beijing Hos-

pital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, said many people develop dry skin during the colder months. "Cold temperatures, low humidity, winds and indoor heat can make skin dry, flaky, scaly, cracked or irritated," she said.

While many seek relief in extra moisturizer and less frequent washings, these can create additional skin problems. "Changes to your skincare routine can lead to an increase in breakouts and redness during the transition

into the colder months," she said.

Many people experience other allergy symptoms during seasonal changes, such as a runny nose or congestion, sneezing and wheezing, itching around the eyes and extremely dry or watery eyes.



CFP Photo

Causes of the condition

"Although skin problems manifest externally, their root cause is often complex and involves an internal imbalance between *chi*, *blood*, *yin* and *yang* in the body's energy channels," Wang said. These can be worsened by external environmental factors.

Internal imbalances include a weak immune system, digestive disorders, poor diet, unbalanced lifestyle, stress, genetic predisposition and unstable emotions. External factors are typically weather related.

Allergies are a result of our bodies interacting with our environment — with foods, chemicals and the natural substances we inhale, ingest or touch. The immune system is designed to identify and attack foreign objects, so when these enter, our bodies react by manufacturing antibodies or releasing histamines," Wang said.

Recognized environmental factors involved in skin conditions and their symp-

toms are:

- 1. Cold:** causes open sores, purplish bruises, wet discharges and slow healing and is usually a chronic condition.
- 2. Damp:** results in a feeling of heaviness and can be worsened internally by eating rich, oily or dairy foods.
- 3. Wind:** sudden itchiness that moves to different areas of the body.
- 4. Dry:** scaly, itchy skin that worsens in the dry winter or autumn weather.
- 5. Heat:** red, burning patches that worsen with the consumption of alcohol and spicy food or with anger, stress and hot weather.

To relieve these conditions you have to strengthen your immune system to decrease its sensitivity to environmental hazards. Then balance your internal systems and expel any remaining toxins from your skin. Things which nourish your *yin* and *blood* can help repair damaged skin," she said.

Tips for relief

1. Relax: hormones that the body produces in response to stress are known to trigger rashes and acne, so develop good habits to help manage stress.

2. Eat a balanced diet: greasy, spicy foods may aggravate skin allergies, so avoiding these should be your first step to clearing up a breakout — smart diet choices and exercise can result in a dramatic improvement.

3. Don't scrub: many people confuse allergies for a cleanliness problem and turn to harsh, cleansing soaps that can worsen breakouts.

4. Don't pop pimples: opening a pimple increases the chance of further infection by pushing bacteria further into the pores, which can cause redness, swelling and permanent scarring.

5. Use oil-free skin care products: skin moisture falls off during winter, which can cause your sweat glands to release more oil; adding even more oil with your moisturizer is a surefire way to clog pores and cause acne, so pick a hydrating-based moisturizer to balance out overactive sweat glands.

Rare disease strikes Nanjing's crawfish eaters

By Chu Meng

For many people, last month's crawfish-related poisoning in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province was their first time hearing about Haff disease, a serious condition that causes a breakdown of skeletal muscles and acute kidney failure.

The condition is caused by eating fish and shellfish that carry an unknown poison. Symptoms include muscle and joint pain present without a fever and neural paralysis, according to a report published by the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) last Friday in Nanjing.

The precise syndrome caused by the

poison is rhabdomyolysis, whereby skeletal muscle is destroyed and its contents are released into the blood.

Included in the report was a history of worldwide outbreaks.

The disease was first detected and named in 1924 at Haff Beach on the Baltic coast, and more than 1,000 poisonings have been identified since then. In 2000, six residents from Beijing were found to have developed Haff disease after eating crawfish.

"While the risk of the disease is low — only 23 out of millions of crawfish eaters across the country during the past decade have ever been poisoned —

adventurous eaters may want to think twice before ordering crawfish," said Wu Yongning, a researcher at the Institute for Nutrition and Food Safety (INFS) under the China CDC.

While symptoms develop within 24 hours of consuming the poison, "medical experts all over the world have yet to discover the exact cause of the disease," he said.

Wu speculated that a small number of crawfish may carry an unknown toxin, possibly absorbed only in certain waters.

Crawfish feed on dead and decaying aquatic life and are farmed in dirty ditches. Documents showed the crusta-

cean was first brought to Nanjing by the Japanese during World War II to help eat decaying bodies.

It is best to cook crawfish at home. Thoroughly rinse them in cold, running water and check that each is alive and active. "Before cooking, try salting it in water for one hour. Salting can help disinfect aquatic species," Wu said. At least 10 minutes of boiling is necessary to kill any bacteria.

However, according to a report by the US CDC, while thorough cooking may kill bacteria, it cannot neutralize any poison present in contaminated crawdads.

Hutong superlatives

Jaunting little-known hutong and exploring traces of Old Beijing



Bangye, meaning a man who shows his upper body during summertime, is a centuries-old scene in hutong.

Zhang Shuo/CFP

By Liang Meilan

Visitors to Beijing frequently explore popular hutong like Nanluoguxiang, which are actually just renovated commercial areas. It is a pity that most miss out on the more authentic hutong scattered throughout town, which more accurately frame the lives of old Beijingers.

Walking into these hutong can be a great experience for urban explorers who enjoy digging deep into a city to uncover its cultural secrets, collecting memorable anecdotes and interesting facts along the way.

But since there are 3,000 hutong in the city, a themed walk requires careful planning. *Beijing Today* recommends a hutong neighborhood just south of Qianmen, formerly part of Beijing's "outer city." The area includes a few less-traveled hutong that people can explore within half a day.

Getting started

Old Beijing was divided into two distinct parts by a massive wall, an inner city – presently the area within Second Ring Road – and an outer city.

The wall was laid across what is now the commercial area of Qianmen. To the north was a well-planned city for aristocrats, while to the south were disorganized districts reserved for "lower class" citizens.

It's the outer city that offers the best clues into everyday life for ordinary people. This was where the city's *laobai* lived out their lives.

The walk starts at Qianmen Walking Street. Toward the west, you'll find a street called Zhubaoshi Jie (Jewelry Market Street), where vendors hawk traditional snacks you can't find anywhere else.

Go directly south from here and keep your eyes peeled, because hidden among the two- and three-story wooden structures and old-style buildings is where you'll catch your first glimpse of Old Beijing.

The narrowest hutong

A few steps down the street, on the right side, is a narrow passageway that is on average 70 centimeters wide. At its narrowest point it is just 40 centimeters.

Thousands of people pass by without noticing, and few would guess that in old times, this hutong represented the city's Wall Street – it is called Qianshi, or Money Market, Hutong.

During Qing Dynasty (1644-1911),

the hutong was home to 26 major mints. At that time, these government-authorized but private-run mints controlled the country's finances.

At the north end of the hutong, a large market hall (Qianshi Market) for money trading still stands. Large business firms or shop owners would go to the market to change species (coins) into taels or vice versa. Everyone in town had to go to the market in the morning to get the best rate.

To prevent robbery, city planners designed the hutong with very little space so that only one or two people could pass at a time.

We can see examples of the neighborhood's prosperity if we examine the hutong closely. On most doors, engravings will express wishes for good health, a good life and loyalty to Confucius doctrines. But some engravings on dark-red wooden doors read, "We will gain million-fold profit and our business will prosper forever."

During the Republic of China period (1912-1949), many of these buildings were converted into banks with huge well-polished stones and solid bricks. Many of the characters that were carved onto the stones are now unreadable, but decorative patterns are still visible, hinting at old wealth.

The hutong with the most turns

At the west end of Zhubaoshijie is a bridge that leads to other parts of the hutong complex. Because of modern-

ization, these hutong have been carved into islands.

Passing through a door and through Puchenshi Hutong, one comes upon a maze-like hutong called Jiuwan (nine turns). This area indeed has nine 90-degree turns, but also many more imperfect turns and cutbacks.

There is a saying that people should not walk from the west to east end of the hutong because it will bring bad luck.

The hutong's residents are commoners who have created a nice community. They'll sit in the open chatting and playing chess or cards. You'll find middle-aged men with bare shoulders lounging around as people have done for hundreds of years.

The buildings in the hutong are old and varied, but they are similarly built, without the use of many iron nails. The tallest mansion, Yixinghuiguan, said to be owned by a wealthy family during ancient times, is famous for being built without a single nail.

The shortest hutong

Close to Jiuwan Hutong is Liuxue Hutong, an old-style open market that has sold fruits and food for hundreds of years. It is still open for business today.

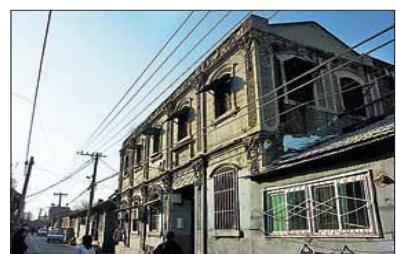
When passing through, people may see a small, bending hutong called Yichi Hutong (one chi equals one-third of a meter). At a length of about 10 meters, it is regarded as the shortest hutong. There are six shops here, three on each side.

Continued on page 21...



Qianshi Hutong, Wall Street of Old Beijing

Photo by Gao Hong



These buildings used to be high-class brothels catering to officials.

Zhang Kaixin/CFP



Jiuwan Hutong is the most winding hutong.

Luan Zhengxi/CFP



A 70-year-old sanxian artist entertains tourists.



The former residence of Xiaofengxian, a 1900s courtesan, is now a hostel.

Photos by Liang Meilan

... continued from page 20

The biggest red light district

The old red light district was at Bada Hutong, which includes eight hutong: Bishun Hutong, Yanzhi Hutong, Hanjitan, Shanyixiang, Shitou Hutong, Wangguangfu Xiejie, Zhujia Hutong and Lishamao Hutong.

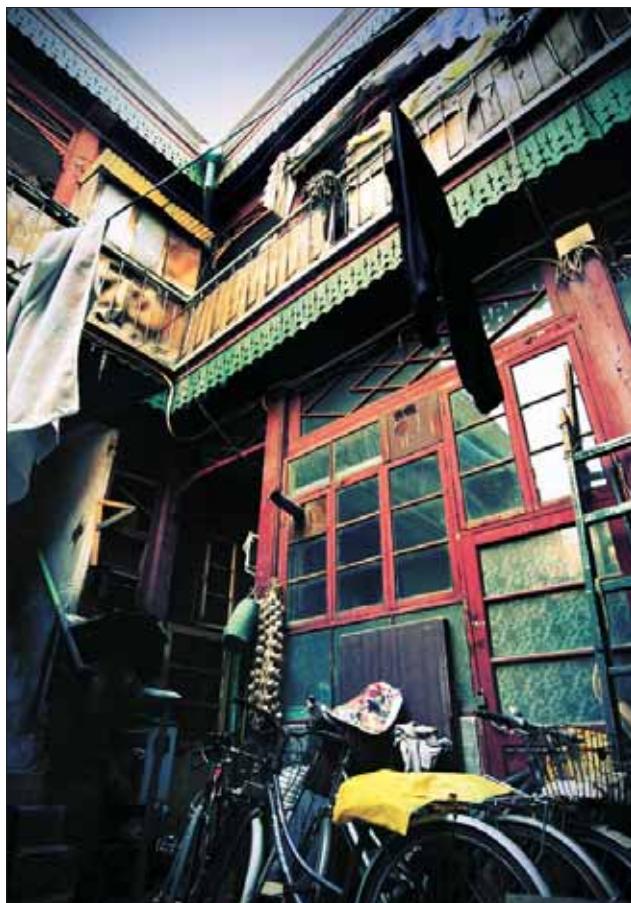
During old times, more than 100 brothels with 700 prostitutes – many of them catering to officials and bureaucrats – lived here. The buildings have largely been demolished and rebuilt, or renovated, but this area used to be filled with two-story brick buildings bearing exquisite decorations.

Through the main door is an open yard that used to be where seedy transactions were finalized. On the second floor are small rooms – available for rent – that used to be service rooms.

Shanglinxianguan, a two-story gray building at Shanxiang, is the former home of courtesan Xiaofengxian and is considered the best-preserved first-class brothel in town. It has been redesigned into a hostel – Leo Courtyard – but has retained many of its original features.

Adjacent to Bada Hutong are hutong that once housed Peking opera stars and other performers. Yanshou Jie (Long Live Street) is one such example; it used to be a ghetto that attracted artists and performers from all around China who sought to win fame in the capital.

The days of resounding music in this hutong have long gone. But Yu Xiaozhang, 70, the great great grandson of Yu Dekui, the founder of Dekui's Club, continues to play the sanxian (three-string fiddle). His distinguished performances, such as "Begging Song," are given in his less-than-10-square-meter living room, not for aristocrats on their way to brothels but for modern listeners who have come to experience a bit of authentic Old Beijing.



Inside an old brothel in Shanxiang

Zhang Shuo/CFP

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<< Free Entrance

Editor: Zhang Dongya Designer: Yang Gen

Dining



Noble Court's autumn menu

Noble Court, Grand Hyatt Beijing's signature Cantonese restaurant, is proud to present its new autumn menu. Using only the best seasonal ingredients and the freshest local produce, the culinary team at Noble Court focuses on "healthy and tonic" food.

Highlights include ginseng and cordyceps flower-marinated cluck chicken jelly terrine; braised eel fillet with truffle and yellow bean paste; braised organic boar belly with bamboo shoots, wild mushrooms and dried chilies; and braised duck with autumn chestnuts and Chinese herbs.

New items will be added to the Weekend Brunch menu for dim sum fans.

Where: Grand Hyatt Beijing, 1 Dong Chang'an Jie, Dongcheng District

When: 11:30 am - 2:30 pm (Monday to Friday), 10:30 am - 2:30 pm (weekends), 5:30-10 pm daily
Tel: 8518 1234 ext. 6024

Neptune Seafood Dinner buffet

Bring your family and friends to The Atrium every Saturday night to savor our Neptune Seafood Dinner buffet. Executive Chef Hans Gorsler prepares a tempting array of delicious seafood delicacies including lobster, freshly shucked oysters and prawns. Complete your evening of dining with a variety of world famous fruits and mouth-watering desserts.

Where: The Great Wall Sheraton Hotel Beijing, 10 Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Cost: 298 yuan per person with soft drinks, house wine and draft beer; save 40 yuan if you arrive between 5-6 pm

Tel: 6590 5566 ext. 2216



Seafood buffet dinner

Beijing's first live seafood offer is available only at CBD International Cuisine. Pick and choose from an array of local and imported shellfish including crawfish, scallops, lobsters, prawns and crabs and have your pick cooked fresh in savory Court Bouillon or Bouillabaisse. The Live Seafood special is available at dinner on Saturdays and Sundays only.

Where: CBD International Cuisine, Grand Millennium Beijing, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Cost: 256 yuan per adult, 126 yuan children aged 5 to 12 years (15 percent gratuity)

Tel: 6530 9383



Hairy crab feast

The Summer Palace invites you to indulge in Beijing's favorite autumn delicacy: fresh hairy crabs. Savor them in deliciously heady dishes such as steamed crab roe and egg white in crab shell, Yangzhou Lion Head minced pork marinated with codfish, crab roe and crab meat and sautéed crab roe and meat with eight treasures.

Where: Summer Palace, China World Hotel, 1 Jian-guomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: October 15 - November 30
Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 34

Event



2010 Hilton Beijing Food and Wine

The 2010 Hilton Beijing's International Food & Wine Experience hits the capital November 6. Visitors can come and partake in the ultimate "vindulgence" at the Hilton's lavish international food and wine tasting event. This year's gathering will collect 2,000 labels for an unforgettable experience of the senses.

Come for lessons in cocktail mixing, cooking demonstrations and food preparation courses by master chefs, and test your luck at blind wine tasting challenges and raffles. The children's section includes games, puz-

zles and toys to keep the kids busy while the parents seize the chance to indulge in food and wine fun.

Where: Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: November 6; 11 am - 8 pm (trade), 1-8 pm (public)

Cost: 230 yuan each, including one dinner buffet
Tel: 5865 5125

DJ Wordy x DJ Lomang

Frustrated by the sea of sameness found at most Beijing night clubs, DJ Wordy (three-time China DMC Champion) and DJ Lomang (NYC/Ghostface Killah's China Tour DJ) are making it their monthly mission to bring something fresh.

With special international guest DJs from Paris, Germany, Japan, New York and San Francisco, HOTPOT is the top choice for non-commercial club music in Beijing.

HOTPOT brings together an eclectic crowd united by the noble goals of zoomma-zoom-zooming and just having fun. Expect anything from Golden Era hip hop to funk, soul, rock 'n' roll, new wave, house and electro.

Where: The Opposite House, 11 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

When: October 29
Tel: 6410 5106

Hotel

Shangri-La offers National Day package

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts has designed a National Day package for all Chinese citizens, including residents of the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions.

Valid from September 22 to October 10, the package applies to all 68 Shangri-La hotels worldwide and includes buffet breakfast for up to two persons, late check-out until 4 pm and a free extra bed. Guests who stay three paying nights at the same hotel can earn a free fourth night or a stay at any hotel and resort or Traders' hotel before January 31.

Members of Golden Circle, Shangri-La's loyalty program, get a complimentary upgrade to the next room category.

For reservations or more information, call Shangri-La at 4001205900 or visit shangri-la.com.

Courtyard Marriott opens as brand's largest

Located in the cultural and entertainment center of Shanghai, Courtyard by Marriott Shanghai Puxi is ideal for business and leisure guests. The hotel offers spacious rooms, an excellent value and easy access to the local rail and subway networks.

Its bright colors, open layout and contemporary furniture reflect an innovative design that creates a welcoming and sociable atmosphere for travelers. The large guest rooms provide both comfort and efficiency, allowing the space to be multi-functional. Deluxe beds, 37-inch LCD panel TVs, iHome docking stations and satellite channels ensure that guests can enjoy their down time, and the well-lit work areas and high-speed Internet facilitate in-room productivity.

Courtyard Shanghai Puxi offers fine cuisine at MoMo Cafe with a menu of Western dishes and local favorites. Order anything from hamburgers to dim sum, pizza to kung pao chicken. The executive lounge on the top floor boasts a spectacular panoramic view of the city and offers complimentary breakfast, evening drinks and snacks.

The hotel has a 24-hour fitness center and an indoor swimming pool. The state-of-the-art ballroom and four function rooms with natural light provide ample meeting space.

Aviation

Singapore Airlines promotes western Australia

Singapore Airlines and Tourism Western Australia (TWA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly promote tourism to western Australia. Under the three-year partnership, Singapore Airlines and TWA will fund marketing campaigns and actively promote inbound tourism by way of Singapore Airlines' Singapore-Perth route.

Singapore Airlines has a 40-year history of service to Australia and currently operates 93 weekly flights to five major cities: 18 to Perth, 19 to Brisbane, 21 to Melbourne, 7 to Adelaide and 28 to Sydney.

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

Can you see all those people mountain people sea?

By Wang Yu

Is Chinglish always embarrassing? Some people don't think so. Sometimes, Chinese-style English can appear to be smart.

Phil is a friend of mine who now lives in Beijing working as a consultant. After work, he becomes a guitarist. He started playing when he was 10 and has been in several bands since coming to Beijing from the US in 2005. Like many expats who have been here for a while, he has adopted a typically Beijing lifestyle.

However, Phil's Chinese is still at beginner level because he hasn't seriously studied the language. He thinks that he can communicate with Chinese people effectively enough in English. And to Phil, the way Chinese people speak English – errors and all – isn't a problem; in fact, he thinks it's charming.

I remember one day when we met at Gulou to have a cup of coffee before rehearsal. It was a roof cafe and the weather was great – no wind, no sand and no smoldering sunlight – and we began talking about the vintage guitar Phil had just brought back from Japan.

Just then, his girlfriend, Amy Zhang, showed up. Amy, a graphic designer, is one of those young Chinese women who are proud of having a Western boyfriend. I understand that sometimes girls like to show off what they have – the boyfriend and the language ability – but they should be more careful sometimes.

"Hey, we were just talking about my new guitar," Phil said to her. "I received it this morning. I promise you it's beautiful, though I need to adjust the neck. You wanna see the picture?"

"It looks nice," Amy said curiously. She did not look happy.



"Amy, what happened? Cheer up!" I said.

"It's all because of the cooker in the restaurant where I had lunch with a

friend. The food was fine but we found hair in the dish. The cooker insisted he would exchange it for a new one but we only wanted our money back. He refused and we quarreled."

"Oh ... the restaurant should be more careful about their food," I said. "However, I think you overreacted."

"But we have the right ..."

"You know what the funny thing is, my dear?" Phil butted in. "Why would you negotiate with the cooker?"

"Because he made the food!"

"Well ... the cooker can't talk! It's the chef that makes your food..." Phil said with a winner's smile.

Amy really began to lose her patience.

"Oh, don't look so agitated ... the mistake is cute ..."

"You know he never takes Chinglish seriously," I added.

"The Chinese government is doing everything it can to eliminate Chinglish from this country, and foreign guys like me are protecting it," Phil said. "There is a 'Saving Chinglish' group on Facebook with over 8,000 people in it."

"So what's your favorite?" I asked.

"I think it might be 'people mountain people sea' for renshan renhai. It refers to crowds and you can easily imagine a scene of so many people getting together that it looks like mountains and seas. And you should know that it has even been used as the official English name of a record label whose Chinese name is Renshan Renhai. That's pretty smart I think."

"What does that have to do with my mistake?" Amy said.

"Well," Phil said, "your mistake reminds me that it takes a certain amount of creativity to mix Chinese logic with English."

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. Beers

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): I think beer in old English is non-countable noun just like "water" and "ink." In the old days, people drank a bottle, a glass or a can of beer. If people wanted to pluralize it, they would have to say: two glasses, bottles or cans of beer. I looked this up in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary and found an entry for beer, not beers. It states that there is green beer, bitter beer, near beer and small beer. However, with modern English evolving so fast, people think it quite normal to say: He drinks a cold beer. It means he drinks a glass of cold beer. If he drinks two glasses of beer, then people say: He drinks two beers. Things are being made simpler as the language is getting simpler. More examples: He would wash down a few beers at the bars around the ballpark. Life is not all beers and skittles.

Terry Boyd-Zhang (TBZ): Yes, "beers" is generally used in spoken English – technically incorrect but acceptable in many situations, just as it'd be fine to say, "We'd like two waters, please," to a waiter in a restaurant.

2. It ships locked.

ZS: Recently I came across this sentence and felt quite puzzled. Here it refers to a batch of mobile phones that will be shipped overseas in a state of being locked for commercial security. It would be perfect to say: it is being shipped locked. But I did not know that the verb "to ship" is included in the category of verbs that can take a predicate. Yet, I feel this is quite a nice sentence – short, vivid, simple and with so much meaning implied in but three words. I would like to have your opinion on this.

TBZ: I find this sentence a bit awkward. I would like to have a bit more content, an object such as: "It ships (phones) locked." I would also like to know what "it" is. Is it a company? (Although this question would likely be clear from the context of the article.) It is a real skill of the writer to be able to say many things with very few words – try reading Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, for example – but most of us have to spell it out more directly. On the other hand, sometimes our writing is fantastic, but the skill of our reader is lacking!

3. Violinist Linked to JAL Crash Blossoms

ZS: This is a newspaper headline from *Japan Today* in its most concise form. Can you make out what this newspaper headline means? You will probably wonder what a "crash blossom" is. As a matter of fact, it is about Diana Yukawa, a successful violinist whose father died in a 1985 Japanese Airlines plane crash. The headline may possibly mislead readers. What it is trying to say is: *The violinist who is linked to a Japanese Airlines crash prospers.* As "blossom" may be a noun or a verb and English words are seldom explicitly modified to indicate their grammatical roles like in French, there is fair chance that someone will misread it. We have another classic example: British Left Waffles on Falklands. You may think correctly that "waffles" is a verb and "left" is a noun – that British leftists are talking foolishly about the Falklands. However, it might be entertaining to reverse the two and you get: The British hastily left behind their breakfast food on the Falklands.

TBZ: That is a funny one! By changing the emphasis in the sentence, it becomes something you really did not intend. Also, the use of "linked" in the above example makes me think that the violinist somehow caused the crash. Be careful! Whenever you can, finish your essays early and let a friend proofread them for you. Otherwise, you might make your teacher laugh very "hardly." "I work very hardly" was a common error when I first arrived in China!

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Please Not To Rely On Support

By Terry Boyd-Zhang

This Chinglish sign was spotted outside the Marriage Registry of the Beijing Civil Affairs Bureau. As most of us know, despite the best of "for better or for worse" intentions, more than 50 percent of marital relationships end in separation or divorce. So the International Women's Federation posted this sign as a warning to all the ladies: Do not trust him any further than you can throw him. If he leaves you, and the odds are definitely not in your favor, you (and your children) are likely to be thrust into poverty, while his economic situation will improve dramatically. This assumes he will default on child support payments and you will be stuck doing it all.

OK, I am joking. The sign was really posted outside Shanghai Normal University during freshmen registration. As most of us know, despite the



Photo by Bian Zheng

desire of parents for their children to be mature individuals, university studies are heavily subsidized by parents who hope that their child will become a future world leader, Nobel Prize winner and internationally recognized concert two-string violin player all at the same time.

But the university posted this sign

as a warning to the new students: Beware! Your parents are ready to cut you off! So, unless you want to be a homeless bum in the future, you had better study hard and get that top management job in one of *Fortune* magazine's top 100 companies. (That is the only way you can repay your parents for their long-suffering care for you!)

Honestly? I do not know where this sign was found but I am guessing that it was found on a bridge, perhaps a rickety one, at a park and it is a warning that the handrail may not be strong enough to hold you. So, before you casually lean back to attract that pretty girl's attention, you may want to reconsider – seeing you on your head in the river below may not be the impression you want to make! Simply: "Please don't lean on the railing."

Movie of the week

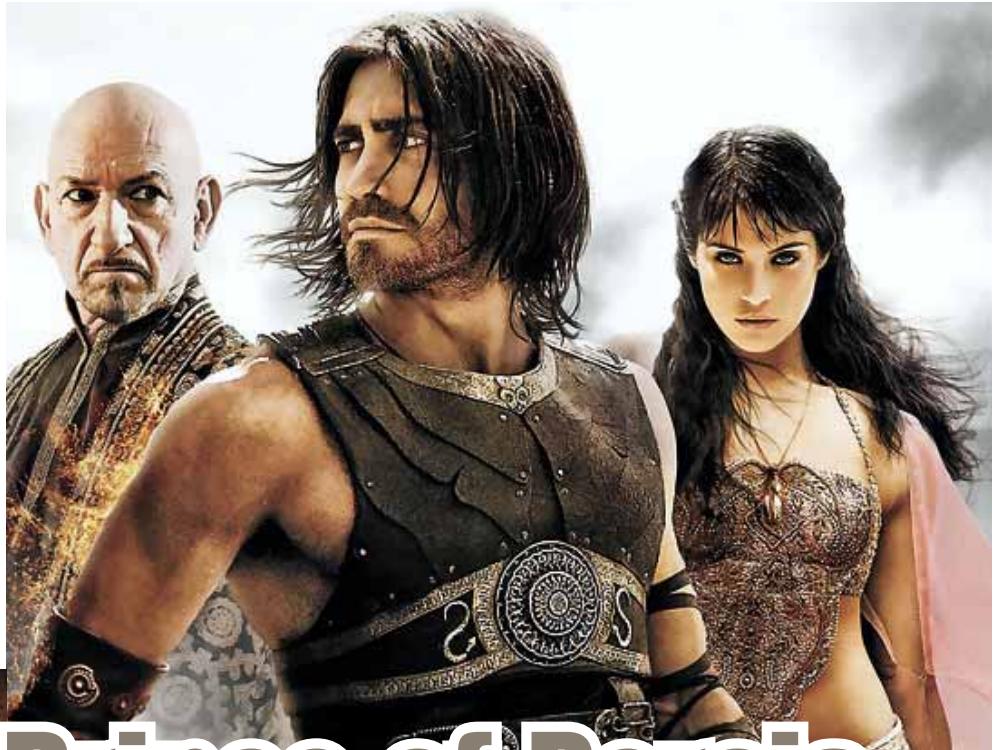
Though critics largely panned *Prince of Persia*, the audience response was quite warm.

The main strength of the movie was the involvement of game series creator Jordan Mechner, who crafted a very engaging story that created an entirely new addition to the mythos. It's clear he wanted to see his brainchild develop into a big-screen success. Like most movies adapted from video games, *Prince of Persia* has a new story that borrows elements from the game but without following it. The film stands alone and does not demand that viewers be intimately familiar with the source material.

One thing is certain: *Prince of Persia* holds the dubious distinction of being the best motion picture adaptation of a video game ever.

Synopsis

Set in mystical ancient Persia, a rogue prince and a mysterious princess race against dark forces to safeguard an ancient dagger capable of releasing the Sands of Time – a relic of the gods that can reverse time and allow its possessor to rule the world.



Prince of Persia The Sands of Time (2010)

Scene 1

(The intro)

Voice-over: Long ago, in a land far away, there once rose an empire that stretched (1) from the steppes of China to the shores of the Mediterranean. That empire was Persia.

Fierce in battle, wise in victory, where the Persian sword went, order followed. The Persian King Sharaman ruled with his brother Nizam upon the principles of loyalty and brotherhood.

The King had two sons who gave him great joy. But in the eyes of the gods, the King's family was not yet complete. Not until the day he witnessed a single act of courage by an orphan boy from the streets of Nasaf.

Scene 2

(In the camp of the Persian army, the brothers are talking about attacking Alamut.)

Nizam (N): Our finest spy intercepted a caravan leaving Alamut. Swords of the best workmanship. Steel-tipped arrows.

Tus (T): A promise of payment from the Warlord Kosh, to Alamut. They're selling weapons to our enemies, Dastan.

Garsiv (G): An arrow such as this slew my horse in Kushkan. Blood will run in Alamut's streets for this.

Dastan (D): Or our soldiers will fall from its walls. Our orders were to subdue (2) Kushkan, not to attack Alamut.

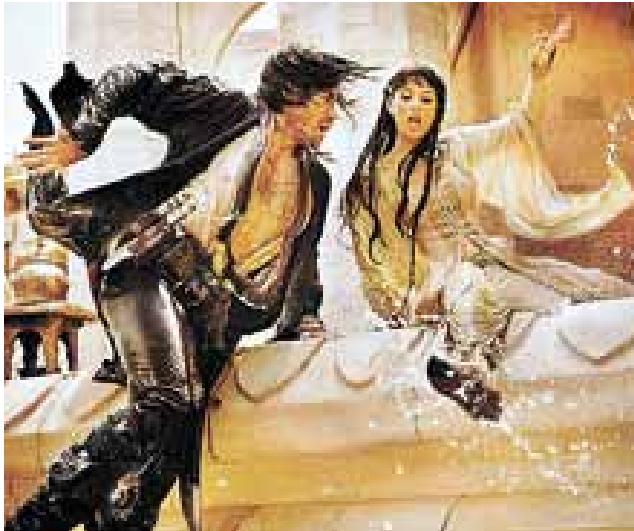
T: Wise words, little brother.

N: Words won't stop our enemies once they're armed with Alamutian blades.

T: We attack at dawn.

D: Well, if that's your decision, then let me go in first.

T: Who wants to share, Garsiv?



G: I'll ride at the head of the Persian Army! Dastan leads the company of street rabble!

D: They may not be much for manners, but they're pretty handy in a fight.

G: The honor of first blood should be mine.

D: Garsiv, you've got your hands on your sword again.

G: Where it should be.

T: Oh, my brothers ... ever eager. It's said the princess of Alamut is a beauty without equal (3). We'll march into her palace and see for ourselves. There'll be no doubt of your courage, Dastan, but you're not ready for this. Garsiv's cavalry will lead the way.

Scene 3

(Hiding in a camp to bear the sand-storm, Tamina tells Dastan the story of the blade.)

D: Nizam is coming to kill us. He needs me dead. I need to know why.

Tamina (T): In Alamut rests the beating heart of all life on earth. The Sandglass of the Gods. Long ago, the gods slipped down (4) on man but saw nothing but greed and treachery. So they sent a great sandstorm to destroy all, wipe clean the face of the earth.

But one young girl asked the gods to give mankind another chance, offering her life in exchange. Seeing the purity within,

the gods were reminded of mankind's potential for good. So they swept the sand into the Sandglass. The dagger was given to the girl who saved man, making her the first Guardian.

The dagger blade is the only thing that can pierce the Sandglass and remove the Sands of Time, but the handle only holds one minute.

D: But what if one were to place the dagger in the Sandglass and press the jewel button at the same time?

T: Sand would flow through endlessly. **D:** Time would flow back as far as you like.

T: Yes, but it is forbidden.

D: When my father was a boy, Nizam saved his life hunting. One day, the two princes were stalking a beautiful buck, but they weren't aware of a lion stalking them. Nizam saved Sharaman. My father told us the story over and over again.

T: I don't understand.

D: Nizam wishes to go back in time and undo what he did. Not save my father, let him die. Then he will be king for a lifetime. And my brothers would never be born.

Vocabulary

1. **stretch:** to extend to full length

2. **subdue:** to conquer and subjugate

3. **without equal:** to be better than anything else or anyone else of the same type

4. **slip down:** here it is taken literally, assuming that the gods are in the sky

(By Wang Yu)